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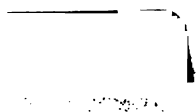
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V.

"HEALTH OF TOWNS:"

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An Examination

OF THE

REPORT AND EVIDENCE OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE;

OF MR. MACKINNON'S BILL;

AND OF THE

ACTS FOR ESTABLISHING CEMETERIES AROUND
THE METROPOLIS.

"My opinion decidedly is, that funerals, in certain churchyards in the metropolis, should not be, without qualification, prohibited. I can imagine very serious evils to arise, if there be any law which shall, without certain restrictions and qualifications, prohibit funerals in certain churchyards; and I do sincerely hope and trust such a stringent law may not pass."
—*Evidence of the Rev. J. C. Abdy.*

"The actual evils which have resulted from it, have been considerably exaggerated; in those churchyards in London, where due care is taken by the parochial officers to secure regularity of interment on a certain system, which prevents the opening of graves within a given time after interment, there is no real detriment to the health of the inhabitants."
—*Evidence of the Lord Bishop of London.*

LONDON:

JOHN SNOW, 35, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1843.

STANFORD

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CONTENTS.

	Page
LETTER I.—General Remarks on the Evidence and on the Bill	1
LETTER II.—Abstract of Mr. Mackinnon's Bill	5
LETTER III.—Selfish Considerations in which the Bill originated	9
LETTER IV.—Ruinous effects of the Cemeteries on the Revenues of the Clergy —Injuries inflicted on Dissenters	14
LETTER V.—Clerical Evidence Examined	19
LETTER VI.—General Evidence Examined	26
LETTER VII.—Medical and Surgical Evidence Examined	30
LETTER VIII.—Evidence of Mr. Walker Examined	35
LETTER IX.—Stratagems of the Cemetery Companies—Evidence of Grave Diggers Examined	41
LETTER X.—The Horrors of Enon Chapel Examined	47
LETTER XI.—Summary—Serious Errors and Oversights of the Select Committee	55

SECOND SERIES.

LETTER I.—On the Character of the Witnesses and the nature of the Evidence— A Speech for the House of Commons	63
LETTER II.—Clerical Taxation of Cemeteries—Clerical Compensation—Family Graves—Desecration of Burial Grounds	69
LETTER III.—Destructive Effects of the Bill on Dissenting Chapels	75
LETTER IV.—The Argument for Compensation to Dissenters—The Bishop of London's Standard of Clerical Compensation	79
LETTER V.—The Grand Collusion between Bishop Blomfield and the Cemeteries	87
LETTER VI.—The Propriety of Supporting the Clergy by Taxes on Dead Bodies, considered	96
LETTER VII.—The History, Character, and Evils of Consecration in relation to the Parochial Burying Grounds	104
LETTER VIII.—The Evils of Consecration in Connexion with the Joint-Stock Ceme- teries—Reduction in Cemetery Fees—Offer of the Directors of Kensal Green Cemetery	110
LETTER IX.—The Argument derived from the Diversified Amount of Fees—the Annual Interment in the City and Out-parishes	116
LETTER X.—Relative Position of Church and Dissenting Burial-grounds—Analogy between the Church-extension and Cemetery-extension Schemes—Clerical Rapa- city illustrated in Norwood Cemetery	123

ADVERTISEMENT. :

THE following Letters are republished from the *Patriot* newspaper by the Committee for Opposing the Bill for "The Improvement of Health in Towns." Without pledging themselves to every statement or sentiment they contain, the Committee are of opinion that they will be found to be an able and faithful exposition of the nature and tendency of the Bill; and they have now much pleasure in tendering their cordial thanks to the laborious and gifted Author for the service he has thus rendered to civil freedom, religious equality, and the rights of property.

JAMES EDWARDS, *Chairman.*

Congregational Library,
30th Nov., 1842.

LETTERS

TO

THE DISSENTERS OF ENGLAND.

LETTER I.

GENERAL REMARKS ON THE EVIDENCE AND ON THE BILL.

ON the 8th of March last, the House of Commons “ordered that a Select Committee be appointed to consider the expediency of forming some legislative enactments (due respect being paid to the rights of the Clergy) to remedy the evils arising from the Interment of Bodies within the precincts of large towns, or of places densely populated.” On the 15th of the same month a Committee was nominated; on the 19th it began the examination of witnesses; and on the 5th of May it terminated its labours. On the 14th of June the Committee presented its Report to the House, with the Minutes of Evidence. On the 5th of the present month, Messrs. Mackinnon, Cowper, and Beckett brought in a Bill for the accomplishment of the contemplated object, which, by the order of the House, has been printed. These documents are before us; we have carefully sifted them; we have well weighed their character, and considered their tendency; and now hasten to apprise you of the evil and danger to be apprehended from them. In doing this, we shall not, at present, proceed beyond general statements, which we shall hereafter substantiate.

The Bill professes to consider the subject under three heads: to prove a Nuisance, to provide a Remedy, and to protect Vested Rights. To establish a nuisance, was the leading object of the Evidence which was taken by the Committee; and that this has been done in some cases, appears probable; but that it has been

done upon a scale so general as to constitute a proper basis for such a measure as is proposed, will, we think, be allowed by no man of common sense, after due investigation. Had this examination of witnesses passed the ordeal of the Queen's Bench, the Evidence would have been reduced to a few pages. Most of the Committee seem to have been mere novices in the work of examination; and many of the witnesses, confessedly, knew nothing whatever about the main subject. The aim of the chief movers seems to have been, to get together a mass of matter as horrible and harrowing as possible; whether of the relators' own knowledge, or of hearsay, or of belief, or of suspicion, was a thing of small moment. Of this we shall give some curious specimens in the sequel. Again, by far the most revolting portions of the evidence have no bearing whatever upon the question. Such portions may prove the existence of a certain kind of nuisance; but, for such nuisances, assuredly the present measure is not the remedy. Nor is this all: not a little of the Evidence, even when pertinent, is unworthy of credit; while that which is beyond suspicion clearly contradicts it, and demonstrates the folly and injustice of the project. The history of Select Committees for the last fifty years, fertile as that history is in examples of things which but ill comport with the purity of justice and with the dignity of legislation, presents nothing more exceptionable and faulty than the Evidence before us.

On evidence so unsatisfactory, the Committee recommend the shutting up of all the places of sepulture in and around the metropolis, and throughout all the great towns of England, and the construction of Cemeteries at considerable distances. A step so very serious called for much care, caution, and deliberation. To a vast majority of our metropolitan population, the scheme is fraught with cruelty. To hundreds of thousands it will prove a wanton outrage on the most tender and sacred feelings of human nature. It will rob the multitudes of the lower and middle classes, among whom the remains of natural affection still continue to operate, of the chief solace of sorrowing friendship—the privilege of following to the tomb the dust of those who once were dear. It will involve an increase of expenditure to the already impoverished masses which they cannot bear; and that, too, at a time when, respectively, they can least of all sus-

tain it,—not seldom at the close of long suspensions from labour, of protracted and expensive afflictions, and too often at the outset of widowhood and orphanage.

The effects of the change proposed, will also be serious upon the interests of religion. It will be a deadly blow to not a few of the most important Dissenting chapels in the realm. We speak only of tendency; but perhaps we should commit no breach of charity, if we affirmed that such also was its design. In due time, we shall adduce the proof. The entire measure is, we believe, one of priestly origin, as it unquestionably is one of ghostly character. The Order, the Evidence, the Report, the Bill, are all broadly stamped with Churchmanship. The great community of Dissenters appears to be an object of utter insignificance in the eyes of this Committee. The feelings, the rights, the property of Nonconformists, are things beneath their notice. The Bill coolly proposes, that this great measure, which is to affect so many of the tenderest interests and most sacred rights of society, shall be worked wholly by the clergy of each parish, or union of parishes, and the Churchwardens. It clothes these parties with the absolute power of making a rate for the purchase and preparation of the proposed Cemeteries. It not only vests in them, likewise, the right of determining the fees which both Churchmen and Dissenters shall pay; but provides for them the still richer luxury of appropriating these fees at pleasure. An ample field is thus preparing for the demon of discord, and a sumptuous feast for clerical rapacity. The utmost care is taken by the Bill, that the fees of the clergy shall be secured and paid to the last farthing; nor are the vested rights of the Vestry Clerk overlooked. The very Sexton is kindly remembered! The Dissenters alone are forgotten! Their property receives no protection; its trustees have no claims; its ministers merit no consideration! Their whole system is treated in the evidence as a "speculation;" and, in the Bill, as a non-entity. It is clearly proved that, for many years, the Established Church has been losing ground in the business of sepulture; but by this Bill she will regain it with a vengeance! To the clergy, therefore, Mr. Mackinnon, the projector of this measure, is another Midas. Mr. Mackinnon touches the sod, and instantly all is gold! By the magic of a "*Be it enacted*," he will convert

the whole territory of the tomb into an inexhaustible mine of treasure! The Rev. W. W. Champneys stated, that the average number of deaths in his parish was about 1,200, while his average number of funerals was only 360. "Does not that," says Mr. Mackinnon, "in your opinion show the necessity of some legislation on the subject?" To this leading question the worthy Rector of Whitechapel replies with grateful emphasis, "It does." To baptize all, to educate all, to marry all, and to bury all, would doubtless be the consummation of clerical bliss.

Such is a general glimpse of this most unjust, most cruel, and most dangerous project. In our next Number we shall proceed to an orderly examination of the whole business, that you may be apprised of your peril, and awakened to a sense of the imperative duties which now devolve upon you. The carrying of this Bill, in its present shape, would be a grievous calamity to Dissenters of every name. If this succeed, moreover, there is, be assured of it, more behind. This is a Church-extension scheme in disguise, and a scheme, too, of the most efficient character. There can be no doubt that Parliament will assemble early, and that this measure will be urged forward with the least possible delay. Now, therefore, is the time for all concerned to bestir themselves. Our counsel will be partly developed in the course of our expositions, and, at the close, we shall be able to recommend a plan of co-operation.

Before closing, we must press one point. Let the Trustees of chapels in large towns, of all Dissenting denominations, with burying grounds, forthwith communicate with us relative to their circumstances. We want facts for the purpose of our argument; such, for example, as the following:—

1. The amount of debt upon their chapels.
2. The extent of their dependence on mortuary fees for the means of meeting the interest and of reducing the principal.
3. The size and situation of their burying grounds, and their condition as to fulness and management.
4. The results, to them, which must flow from the interdict of all further interment.

These are facts of which we urgently request the immediate transmission, authenticated by the names and addresses of the writers.

August 31, 1842.

LETTER II.

ABSTRACT OF MR. MACKINNON'S BILL.

WE now proceed to give the substance of Mr. Mackinnon's Bill.

The first and second clauses interdict all interments in or under any church, chapel, or other place of religious worship, and in or within the distance of *Two Miles* from the precincts or boundaries of the cities of London or Westminster, or the borough of Southwark, or within *one mile* of any other city, town, or borough in England, which shall contain a given number of houses rated for the relief of the poor to the amount of *Ten Pounds* or upwards.

The third clause states, that the precincts or boundary of all such places, for the purposes of the Act, are to be deemed and taken to be co-extensive with the public lamps and paving of the same.

The fourth clause provides for the appropriation of the Parochial Burial Grounds, which, after they shall have been *Five Years* closed, may be planted with shrubs or trees; but no excavations or disturbance of the soil will be allowed till *Twenty years* after the last interment in the same.

The fifth clause prohibits the delay of the burial of bodies beyond a given period, which varies according to the seasons.

The sixth clause enacts that the Rector, Vicar, or Incumbent, and the Churchwardens of every parish, township, or place, in every such city, town, borough, or place, respectively, to be affected by the Bill, shall form a Parochial Committee of Health for every such parish, &c.; or, in the event of a Union of any two or more parishes for the purposes of the Act, then the collective body of the Rectors, Vicars, or Incumbents, and Churchwardens of such parishes, are to form the Committee of Health for the Union, and all the powers which the Act confers are to be executed by the majority of the members forming such Board.

Such Committee are, by a subsequent clause, authorised to lay a rate on the public, to purchase land for Cemeteries, and "to lay out and plant the same in such manner as they shall think proper." One part of the Cemetery is to be consecrated for the burial of the dead according to the rites of the Established Church; and such distinctive marks of separation are to be set up between the two portions of the Cemetery as the Bishop may require.

It is further proposed, that a piece both of the consecrated and of the unconsecrated ground shall be set apart for the burial of the poor; and it is to be held "lawful for the Committees of Health to make such arrangements for the conveyance to the Cemetery, and for the burial of the remains of any such poor, and to defray any expense incidental thereto, out of the money to be received by virtue of this Act, as such Committees may think proper."

The Committees are further empowered to fix and settle a Table of Fees to be paid on interments, and also the purchase-money to be paid for the exclusive right of burial, as well as for the right of constructing any vault or place of burial, or erecting, or placing any monument or grave-stone in the Cemetery.

When any Cemetery shall have been opened, it is to be at the option of the Rector, Vicar, or Incumbent of the parish for which it has been constructed, to continue the performance of the duties and the receipt of the same fees as he enjoyed in the parochial ground; and, if he decline, he shall receive compensation. The same provision extends to the Clerk and Sexton, both of whom may also continue their offices; and, if they decline, the Committee may compensate them. The services of all these parties are limited to the consecrated ground. When the Clergyman declines, the Committee, with the consent of the Bishop, are to appoint a Chaplain; and, when the Clerk or Sexton declines, the Committee are to appoint successors.

Such are the main clauses of this Bill. Its omissions are far more important than its provisions. The Bill, although loose and flimsy, is most craftily drawn. Its selfish origin and sectarian character are as much as possible concealed by the drapery of an affected regard for public health, and veneration for the

ashes of the dead. Its real object and sure tendencies can be discovered only by a careful scrutiny of the Evidence on which it is professedly founded.

Now, waiving for the present the principle of the Bill, which we shall afterwards fully discuss, the first thing that demands attention is, the constitution of the proposed Boards of Health, which is, in all points, the very worst that could be conceived. The proposal, however, is not an involuntary blunder, but a thing of cool deliberation and deep design. It is in flat contradiction to the plan recommended by the Select Committee in their Report, which asserts the necessity of "some central and superintending authority to be established for the purpose;" something analogous to the Poor-Law Commission. Again, in the Resolutions of the Select Committee, appended to their Report, which Resolutions comprise the main principles of the Bill, it is declared that the working of the entire scheme "should be entrusted either to some department of the Government, or to a Board of Superintendence, to be constituted by the Act of Parliament." Such were the views of Mr. Mackinnon's Committee on the 15th day of June; but, on the 5th of August, Mr. Mackinnon himself presents to the House a Bill which repudiates at once both Government interference and the creation of a Central Board!

These facts sufficiently show, as we have said, that the proposal is a deliberate one; but additional proof is ready furnished to us. Mr. Mackinnon's attention had been specially called to the subject in April by a Mr. Baker, an intelligent surgeon, resident in Leeds, and one of the ablest and most important witnesses that appeared before the Committee. Mr. Baker proposed to lay a rate upon Churchmen and Dissenters equally for the purchase of the ground, and then to divide it between them, "while," says he, "I would vest the freehold in neither, but in the Town Council; if there were no Town Council, in the Commissioners; if there were no Commissioners, in the Magistrates of the division." In reply to this, Mr. Mackinnon asks: "Why should it not be vested in the officiating clergyman and the churchwardens?" Mr. Baker rejoins: "If you put the freehold in neither party, neither in the Church nor in Dissent, you accomplish two objects: you take from both sides

the power of cavil, and you would sell the graves back again so as to pay, in three years, the rate which was levied." Mr. Redhead Yorke, a member of the Committee, thus addressed Mr. Baker:—"You said it was desirable to keep such a ground as that you have spoken of free from party distinction. Does it not strike you, that, in giving the ground to the Town Council, you would essentially be making *party* property of it, since the Town Council will, of course, be composed of persons of every kind of religious persuasion?" The answer to this singular objection was obvious. "That," said Mr. Baker, "was the very reason I thought it would *not* be party property, because they are completely mixed, and they seem to be the best sort of guardians."

Mr. Mackinnon's course is quite unaccountable, except on the supposition, that he is bidding for ecclesiastical popularity against Sir Robert Inglis. He goes not only in the teeth of the recommendation of his own Committee, but even of his principal witnesses. G. A. Walker, Esq., his main prop, gave it as his "opinion, that all funerals indiscriminately, from the highest to the lowest, should be taken under the authority of Government;" and declared that he "would not allow the parish authorities to have any thing to do with it." Nay, even the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London himself blushed at the idea, and felt or feigned, for once, more of the patriot than of the prelate. His keen eye clearly saw that wise men of all classes would indignantly resent a proposal so full of arrogance, and so foreign to the spirit of just legislation. His words are memorable. "I must add my conviction," says he, "that, in the case of the metropolis, the most important of all cases, it would be extremely desirable that Government should take it into its own hands; that Government should provide a Cemetery, and make such regulations as may be necessary." The mystery of this liberal declaration of the most politic prelate that has occupied the metropolitan see for ages, will be cleared up in our next Letter. In spite of all, Mr. Mackinnon obstinately adheres to his preposterous project of throwing the entire matter into the hands of the Church. We cannot divine with what eyes he has read history, but he has read it to little purpose. He has obviously still to learn even the first principles of

political prudence. He appears to know but little of the feelings and constitution of English society, and also to be a stranger to the subject of civil equality and religious freedom. There is reason, however, to believe that he is little more than a Parliamentary agent in the business—a sort of cat's-paw to the clergy.

September 3, 1842.

LETTER III.

SELFISH CONSIDERATIONS IN WHICH THE BILL ORIGINATED.

You have already witnessed the invincible determination of Mr. Mackinnon, if possible, to throw the entire management of the sepulture of the great towns of England into the hands of the clergy. This fact explains the otherwise inexplicable declaration of the Bishop of London, set forth in the foregoing Letter. The wily Churchman well understood his position; he felt that, with such a coadjutor, he might safely for once merge the prelate in the patriot, and give good counsel. His Lordship confessedly knew all that had been spoken by the majority of the previous witnesses. He was fully apprised of what had been said upon the subject of parochial authority during the examination of the Rev. Dr. Russell, H. H. Milman, J. T. Robinson, W. W. Champneys, and others. The place among the witnesses assigned to this consummate master of worldly wisdom, was worthy of his acceptance, and well fitted to serve his object. He came last, and performed his part with great ability and dexterity, in correcting, confirming, and supplementing former evidence. Throughout, his candour, as usual, ministers to his cunning. It is instructive to observe with what tact and prudence he advances, step by step, soft and slow, like the fox upon the hen-roost, till he reaches the main point whence he springs upon his object. And what is that object? It is to place the working of this great measure in the hands of the Church-building Commissioners! Hear

his Lordship: "My opinion is, that, if you should think it desirable to have the control or direction of anything like a central authority, you could not entrust it to better hands than those of the Church-building Commissioners." Here Charles James is himself again, still true to his principles and character. After the deepest recession,

" I have seen
The ambitious ocean swell, and rage, and foam,
To be exalted with the threatening clouds."

The Bishop enforces this most ominous suggestion by an intimation that the Church-building Commissioners, (of whom his Lordship is himself the leader,) "have been engaged now for some months in endeavouring to consolidate the eight Church-building Acts into one; and," he significantly and emphatically adds, "we certainly propose in that Act to take a more clearly defined power of calling upon parishes to provide additional burial-grounds." In this way the sagacious Bishop is multiplying the chances of success in the present desperate effort to recover the ground which the Church has lost in the empire of Death. If the Commissioners cannot obtain the command of the Cemeteries, the next step is, to place them in the hands of the clergy, which will serve quite as well. The Cemetery scheme is, after all, only the counterpart of the Church-extension scheme. It is the object of the one to provide for the accommodation of the living; of the other, for that of the dead. The Church considers that, in past times she neglected her duty to both; and she finds that of both, a great majority have slipped away from her. While, therefore, the Bishops control the new churches, they also aspire, either directly by the Commission, or indirectly through the clergy, to control the new Cemeteries. This is chance the first. If this fail, there will be no Cemeteries; the present Bill will drop, and the power of compelling parishes to provide new burial-grounds will be demanded in the forthcoming Bill of the Church-building Commissioners. This is chance the second. Whatever be the result, however, the territory of the tomb will not even then be surrendered. For the recovery, extension, and preservation of this, "the successors of the Apostles" will contend, if not with fire and sword, at least

with spade and pick-axe. Mark our words, and prepare for the defence of your rights and privileges, as Englishmen and as Christians !

Great zeal is now manifested for the public health ; and frightful discoveries are, for the first time, now made of the impending perils of city sepulture. Have you still to be taught to distrust the zeal of Churchmen ? Do you believe that they are borne down by an overwhelming anxiety for the public health ? No ! But, to do them justice, they do not profess it. They candidly avow that it is with them very much an affair of bread and meat, of roast beef and plum-pudding. Both Bishop and clergy, and even the sextons avow this to be the case. How could they with decency do otherwise ? The Church has not moved till the spirit of lawful commerce has surrounded the city with abundance of Cemeteries of the most excellent description. Witness that of Kensal-green on the west, of Norwood and of Nunhead on the south, of Abney-park on the east, of Highgate on the north, besides others nearer town. It is not the want, but the increase of accommodation for the dead, *apart from the Church*, that alarms the good lady with her children. This new order of things has now reached a pass that threatens the utmost peril to her privileged fraternity. The Bishop, in his evidence, in spite of his caution, lets out many curious points of inference, as well as matters of fact illustrative of the real character of this project. It shows that two classes of Cemeteries have been opened, the one with and the other without Acts of Parliament. The spiritual Lord is much concerned that there are several " Cemeteries of considerable size in London, which are open without the sanction of the Act of Parliament, and consequently without consecration." Now, you must understand, that such measures as this are fraught with double mischief : first and worst, the enormous fee for consecration is lost to his Lordship—an evil of no slight magnitude ; for, if he charges for Cemeteries as he does for churches, the sum would purchase no mean freehold. But, secondly, in such Cemeteries, no fees are provided for the clergy of the Established Church. In addition, therefore, to whatever benefits may accrue to the dead from cemeterial consecration, there is always a twofold blessing to the living. The Bishop,

foreseeing the effect of the Cemeteries, determined to wield his crosier for the protection of his sons in the Gospel. He resolved to consecrate no place whose directors did not bind themselves by Act of Parliament, to pay a tax upon every corpse they interred, to the minister from whose parish it was brought; and thus the Bishop supported the clergy. The clergy, in their turn, will bury in no place which has not first been consecrated, and thus the clergy support the Bishop.

Dr. Blomfield, notwithstanding his far-sightedness, was rather puzzled, in the absence of experience, how to determine the amount of the tax to be exacted of the Cemeteries. That imposed on Kensal-green, "proved," according to the Bishop, "to be an utterly inadequate compensation;" the Incumbent of Paddington "considers himself to have lost at least 200*l.* a-year; and the loss to the Rector of St. Mary-le-bone," the Bishop says, "cannot be less." The next Cemetery opened was that of Highgate, the Act for which was passed during the Bishop's absence from Parliament through severe illness. That Act imposes a tax on bodies for the benefit of the Clergymen from whose parishes they are carried; and "there again," says the Bishop, "they are great losers." This was the second blunder, but it was the last. "The next Cemetery near London," he tells us, "was that of West London and Westminster. In that case, the Company are obliged by law to pay a fee of *ten shillings* for every funeral, to the Clergyman from whose parish it comes. That sum was considered by the Clergymen whom I consulted upon that occasion, as being a fair compensation." Here, then, is a sight worth beholding,—a body of satisfied Clergymen! The wonder, however, lies in the fact, not in the reason. Ten shillings sterling for every corpse in their parish taken to the Cemetery! He must indeed be

"A fox in stealth, a wolf in greediness,"

whom such an extortion would not gratify. We blush while we record it! On what principle of justice, reason, or Scripture, can such a system be defended? Before we can place a little infant dust in that ground, independently of the charges for the funeral and the tomb, we must be taxed the sum of ten

shillings for the benefit of a man whom, perhaps, we never heard, never saw before, and from whom neither we nor our household ever received the slightest advantage! Is this the religion of the Bible? Is this a Pauline tradition? Is this a mark of the true "Apostolic succession?" Let the Bishop and the metropolitan clergy look into the evidence under Question 1865, that they may be instructed, corrected, and confounded by an exhibition of barbarian justice, with regard to the rights of conscience and the rights of man. Colonel Campbell, at whose instance all the burial-places were removed out of Alexandria, on occasion of the plague, states, that "for each religion there was a separate burial-place; a Protestant burying-place, a Roman Catholic burying-place, a Greek Church burying-place, a Jewish burying-place, a Mahometan burying-place, and an Armenian burying-place." But we injure Mehemet Ali in styling his government barbarous. In many points, but especially in this, the Mahometan vassal is at once an example and a reproach to the bench of English Bishops.

The State Clergy have been so long accustomed to domineer over the people of this country, and in particular to trample on the rights of Dissenters, that, in many of their bosoms, the moral sense seems nearly dead. Of this an extraordinary example is furnished in the examination of the modest Rector of Whitechapel, the Rev. W. W. Champneys. When informed by the Committee, that, in the Cemeteries established by companies, two chapels were generally erected, one for the Church and another for Dissenters, in their respective portions of the ground, and asked, whether he felt any objection to that system being carried out in the Cemeteries contemplated by this measure, the reverend witness was utterly shocked! This Minister of Righteousness saw nothing but rectitude and beauty in first taxing Churchmen and Dissenters indiscriminately for the purchase and preparation of the Cemeteries,—that preparation including a fine structure for the funeral services of the Churchman,—and leaving the poor Dissenter to perform his services in the open air, or with his own funds to build a Chapel for himself! But "by legislative enactment erecting the Chapel of the Dissenter on a level by law with the Church," even with funds taken from his own pockets, was a deed which excessive

scandalised the Rector of Whitechapel. After this utterance, Mr. Vernon, as if to abash him, said, "You object to a Dissenting Chapel being erected out of funds provided parochially?" "Yes," was the reply, "and by legislative enactment raised on a level with the chapel of the Church of England."

Such are the men by whom this Bill proposes to work the new system of Cemeteries; but we do trust that the voice of the country will be raised with effect against it. Surely England is not to continue under priestly domination for ever! Surely Dissenters will at length awake to their danger and their duties! "The Scripture tells us," says Swift, "that 'oppression maketh a wise man mad;' therefore, consequently speaking, the reason why some men are not 'mad,' is, because they are not 'wise;' however, it were to be wished, that 'oppression' would, in time, teach a little wisdom to fools." Dissenters, be instructed by a Dean!

September 7, 1842.

LETTER IV.

RUINOUS EFFECTS OF THE CEMETERIES ON THE REVENUES OF THE CLERGY—INJURIES INFLICTED ON DISSENTERS.

IN the preceding Letter, we affirmed that the losses sustained by the clergy, rather than considerations of the public welfare, prompted Mr. Mackinnon's preposterous Bill. The sight of Cemeteries provided by Companies on all sides of the City revealed to them their true position, which was still further illustrated by vulgar arithmetic. What with the effect of liberal legislation on baptisms, and of Cemetery association on burials, the perils of the priesthood became both obvious and imminent. The parish clerk of St. Stephen's, Coleman-street, in the city of London, thus speaks: "Since the Register Act came into force, that has made a great difference: they used to have from 3,000 to 4,000 baptisms in the year; they have now little more than 1,000; they have nothing to depend on but the burials; parties go to district chapels to be married; and, if they have nothing

but the burials to depend on, or a compensation, their bread is entirely taken away." This honest man is a philosopher.

The condition of the clergy was not better than that of the parish clerks. Their prospects were equally alarming. Their loss and danger were confined to no single locality of the city or its suburbs. The Curate of St. Dunstan's, Stepney, states that the interments in his ground are fewer now than they have been for two hundred years; that for many years the average was 700; but that, since the opening of certain Cemeteries in the neighbourhood, it has been so reduced, that last year it did not exceed 400. This blow was mainly struck by Mr. Barber Beaumont's Cemetery, erected five or six years ago, and in which the Curate believes there are 1,000 burials a-year. His burial-ground has also been much damaged by the burial-ground in Globe-lane. In consequence of these Cemeteries, the "fees have been diminished most seriously." The Incumbent has lost "at least 300*l.* a-year." Now, let it be remembered, that in Stepney churchyard there was no "cramming." Mr. James states, that it "contains perhaps upwards of three acres of ground, and there are some parts of that burial ground which have not been touched;" and he asserts that no circumstance ever arose "affecting public decency or public health." In such a case, then, legislation is not required for the public, but for the priest! Close the private Cemeteries and Dissenting burial grounds, and thereby restore him his fees, and he wants no more. The Rector of Whitechapel, we have already shown, for some time has not buried much more than a fourth of his parishioners, and, with regard to that proportion, he says, "the number of interments has decreased in latter years, and that decrease is still going on."

The Rev. J. E. Tyler, Rector of St. Giles's-in-the-Fields, declares that his new Cemetery was the only means of keeping "up the living," for "the burials round the church have fallen off."

Clerical experience, at the West-end of the town, fully corroborated that from other quarters. The Rev. H. H. Milman, Rector of St. Margaret's, Westminster, after declaring that the churchyard space was quite large enough for Westminster, and that he knew of no evil whatever arising from sepulture there,

affirms that the weekly interments "have diminished very considerably; the more opulent have in general removed their interments to the Cemeteries;" and that, but for the tax laid upon Cemetery funerals for the benefit of the clergy, their "emoluments" would be "half swept away." The Bishop himself affords a large amount of startling illustration as to the effect of the Cemeteries upon the emoluments of the clergy. Of these we may take, as one of the most decided, the case of St. James's, Westminster. During the six years previous to 1838, the yearly average of the Incumbent's fees for burials was 405*l.*; in 1838, when the Cemetery system had come into something like full operation, the fees were reduced to 120*l.*; in 1839, they were 130*l.*; but, in 1840, they fell as low as 81*l.*! Thus the revenues of the clergy were getting

"Fine by degrees, and beautifully less,"

when Charles James and his tools had recourse to this expedient to raise their falling fortunes.

Dissenters of England! This is a part of the history and the mystery of the present sepulchral enterprise. Does it go no deeper; does it extend no further? Yes, verily; it is a profound and a wide-spread plot! It aims a blow at Dissent in all the great towns of England. An opinion prevails among Churchmen, that the profits of sepulture form, in such places, one of the main pillars of Dissent. Some of the witnesses who appeared before Mr. Mackinnon's Committee have been guilty of most villanous misrepresentation upon this point. A person calling himself George Whitaker gave the Committee not a little satisfaction in speaking of Hoole and Martin's ground, in Southwark. In reference to that Cemetery and the Methodist chapel connected with it, Colonel Fox, whose name is dear to Dissenters, and a sure passport to the confidence of all patriotic Englishmen, put a question which we deeply regret, because it involves a great principle, and indicates the Hon. and Gallant Member's entire unacquaintance with the subject.

"Q. 485. Colonel Fox: Is not the whole thing a speculation, the chapel, burial ground, and all?—Yes."

The point thus started was too important not to be followed up by Mr. Mackinnon.

“ Q. 486. CHAIRMAN : Is it the custom of Dissenting Ministers to establish speculations of that sort in this town?—Yes : it has been remarked to me that they gain more money by the dead than by the living.”

This grateful slander had passed unrefuted, but for the generosity of Mr. Ainsworth, who checked the traducer, and fixed him down to a point.

“ Q. 499. MR. AINSWORTH : You have said it was remarked that the Dissenting Ministers got more from the dead than from the living?—Yes ; it was so remarked to me.

“ Q. 500. To what did that apply?—It related particularly to Enon Chapel. Mr. Howse was then the minister ; and from the stench that arose from the dead bodies, the congregation in a great measure left the chapel ; and the remark which was made was, that more money was made from the dead than from the living.

“ Q. 501. It was a remark which referred to Enon Chapel chiefly?—Yes.

“ Q. 502. Do you know of any other?—I have never heard the remark applied to any other.”

Thus honourably and completely did Mr. Ainsworth demolish the foul calumny of this son of Sycorax, for which we tender him our cordial thanks. This exposure took place on the 18th of March. Will you believe that the slander was revived on the 6th of April? Will you believe that the resurrectionist was the Hon. Chairman himself, W. A. Mackinnon, Esq., M.P.? Know, then, that this gentleman returned to the subject with perfect gravity, as a solemn puzzle which it was of the utmost importance to have solved ; and he accordingly addressed to G. A. Walker, Esq., his chief metropolitan witness, the following question :—

“ Q. 840. CHAIRMAN : Can you explain the evidence of one of the witnesses, that in *many* of the Dissenting Chapels, the speculators have made more by the dead than by the living?”

Upon this question we put another : What shall be thought of the man who could revive such a point, and solicit such an explanation, after that very witness had been driven from his position, and made to eat his own words? Did not Mr. Ainsworth compel him to give his own explanation? Was ever self

refutation more complete? Was ever a falsifier more confounded? Mr. Mackinnon, however, remembered the lie, but forgot the retraction, and sought relief by consulting the Doctor of Drury-lane! That gentleman's answer is as follows:—

“He is perfectly correct in that; there is no doubt many of those chapels have been established as *speculations*. I believe that *many of them would not have been established, but for their being enabled to bury the dead.*”

This is the language of the Chief City Agitator in behalf of the Cemetery Scheme, of the man who wrote a book upon the subject about two years ago, and more recently a pamphlet. Dissenters will, from his evidence on this point, know how to estimate the value of his statements, when he speaks upon others. We do not designate him an “artificer of fraud;” but it is well known to ten thousand respectable men in this city, that the first part of his answer is a flat falsehood; that, so far as the regular Dissenters are concerned, his second assertion is wholly untrue; and that the third is an unfounded assumption. The gentleman speaks in ignorance, or he does not. If the former, he ought to inquire, or be silent; if the latter, he should remember that a good cause never calls for the aid of misrepresentation, and that a good man will never give such aid to a bad one!

———“We lay these honours on this man,
To ease ourselves of divers slanderous loads.”

There is something very equivocal about this question of Mr. Mackinnon. It is difficult to say whether he considers the alleged fact of Dissenters “making more by the dead than by the living” a thing of shocking wonder, or an alarming invasion of the rights of the clergy, as the chartered inheritors of all the spoils that can be gathered in the region of death. If the former, it will ultimately appear that he might have reserved his wonder for his friends the clergy; if the latter, we shall by and by require him to justify the prescription. We leave him for the present to choose between degradation and difficulty.

While Mr. Mackinnon and his Drury-lane witness are deeply in error as to the profits of sepulture arising from Dissenters' burial-grounds, and likewise as to the origin and support of the chapels with which they are connected, it is nevertheless assur-

edly a principal part of our complaint, that Dissenters have a very large amount of capital vested in burial-grounds, which it is, there is reason to believe, the aim and object of Mr. Mackinnon's Bill to annihilate. Granting, then, for the present, that things are as they are represented by Walker and Whitaker, does he not see the difficulty which is thus presented to an upright legislator? Is he prepared to meet that difficulty, by simply pronouncing, in every case, that the "chapel, burying-ground, and all is a speculation?" Is he thus prepared to treat the memorial presented to his Committee by the Society of Friends? That valuable body of citizens "desire to be excepted in any recommendation which the Committee on the 'interment of bodies,' may think necessary." Would it be a meet reply to this modest request to say, "Your burial-grounds in Finsbury, Whitechapel, Ratcliff, Bermondsey, and Stoke-Newington, are all a speculation?" Is the time come, when such words are to emanate from the lips of a British Senator? What do Honourable Members mean by speculation? They apply the term in a sense wholly new; and, would they condescend to exercise their thoughts a little about the definition of Dissenters' burying-grounds, it might help somewhat to enlighten them relative to the merits of the proposed Bill. Neither Friends, nor Dissenters of any other name, are surprised that conscientious Churchmen should desire to lay their bones under or around the walls within which they habitually worship; but they think it hard, when Dissenters make provision for the indulgence of so natural and affecting a desire, to be told, it is "all a speculation!"

September 10, 1842.

LETTER V.

CLERICAL EVIDENCE EXAMINED.

OUR last Letter demonstrated that the metropolitan and suburban burial-grounds of Dissenters, and the remoter Cemeteries, *were telling with fatal effect upon the parochial interments.*

also showed that, in the judgment of Mr. Mackinnon and his supporters, the main prop of the Dissenting interest in the metropolis consists in the fees derived from burial-grounds. The object of the Bill is, entirely to annihilate this, and to introduce another order of things. Should the Bill, in its present shape, pass into a law, it will, in one day, close every place of sepulture, not only within the metropolis, but also from its extremities, that is, from the termination of the paving and the lighting, to a distance of two miles beyond. This, its projectors hope, will smite Dissent like a thunderbolt. The effect of the Bill in this direction is, in the eyes of Mr. Mackinnon, one of its chief merits. Hence his obvious and reprehensible anxiety to draw from his witnesses the most exaggerated statements of the revenues of Dissent. Hence, too, his insidious attempt to effect, through Surgeon Walker, the restoration of the preposterous and calumnious evidence of a former witness, who had completely broken down. The reason of this conduct is obvious; the more extravagant the misrepresentation upon this point, the more is the value of Mr. Mackinnon's services in behalf of the Church and her clergy magnified. But while his Bill would close the whole of the Dissenting burial-grounds, it would also operate most adversely upon the Cemeteries which have been formed by voluntary associations. It would, we hesitate not to say, render them comparatively valueless. Before twelve months elapsed, shares in them would fall 25 per cent.; before another year, 25 per cent. more; and so the depreciation would go on, till the speculation ended in ruin. All these voluntary Cemeteries would be viewed and represented by the clergy as the heathenish creations of mere mercantile speculation. As receptacles for the dead, formed by laymen, governed by laymen, and—notwithstanding the enormous taxation of interments for the benefit of the clergy—productive to laymen, and consequently apart from the Church, and beyond her control, they would be denounced in true Catholic style, by bell, book, and candle! From the very outset, the great majority of the dead of the several parishes would be interred in the new parochial Cemeteries, and every year would reduce the minority, till it were annihilated. A machinery would be easily prepared, and indefatigably worked, for the accomplishment of this object; and thus the Church

would once more establish her ghostly empire over the entire territory of the tomb; and thus, too, her cormorant clergy would go on from sire to son, fattening on the dead, after having fleeced the living!

Dissenters of England! Be not deceived: rest assured, these are the grand objects contemplated by this Bill. To accomplish them, Mr. Mackinnon has undertaken this discreditable enterprise, and has made up his mind, without a sigh, to lacerate the tenderest feelings, to disturb the vested rights, to sacrifice the valuable property, and to invade the religious freedom, of a large portion of her Majesty's best subjects. Mr. Mackinnon and his priestly prompters are so intent upon this end, that they are apparently not very scrupulous about the character of their means. Still, the forms of justice must be observed; there must be an attempt at proving the nuisance as a ground of the necessity of the measure; but the semblance of proof must not be confounded with the reality. Mr. Mackinnon has made out his real, but not his ostensible case. The honourable gentleman has yet to learn that much talk is not necessarily much evidence. He and his Committee are either incapable of dealing with evidence, or their feelings have warped their judgments. Nor is this either all, or the worst: their Report does not fairly represent the evidence which was before them. Their conclusion is, in fact, quite contrary to the bulk of the only credible testimony. The great preponderance of the real evidence is on the other side. To men of legal habits, or with the merest smattering of legal knowledge, the evidence itself would be a subject of laughter, and the Report an object of scorn. But we appeal to you simply as men of common sense; and shall now set before you an exhibition which will not fail at once to prove this serious allegation, and also enlighten you on the true end and pernicious character of Mr. Mackinnon's Bill.

The first, and, in all points, by far the most important class of witnesses, were the clergy, of whom no fewer than twelve appeared before the Committee. Of these gentlemen, all who spoke to the point, with but one insignificant exception, so far from supporting, overturn Mr. Mackinnon's first great principle, viz., that "interment within the precincts of large towns or populous places is injurious to the health of the community."

1. The Rev. J. C. ABDY, of St. John's, Southwark, says, "My opinion decidedly is, that funerals, in certain churchyards in the metropolis, should not be, without qualification, prohibited. I can imagine very serious evils to arise, if there be any law which shall, without certain restrictions and qualifications, prohibit funerals in certain churchyards; and I do sincerely hope and trust such a stringent law may not pass. In my own parish we have a very large spacious churchyard, and we have no inconvenience arising from the interment of the dead: we have a number of vaults; there are many of them with scarcely more than one or two tenants, and they may hold from ten to twenty more."—*Does this witness prove the nuisance?*

2. The Rev. JAMES ENDELL TYLER, Rector of St. Giles's-in-the-Fields, a witness of the first class, says: "Having been there sixteen years, I never have heard of a complaint from the neighbours. We have three schools, the windows of which open into the churchyard; and we all think it a great advantage to have that free circulation of air. We have never, in any one instance, found any effluvia from the churchyard. On the contrary, it is a decidedly healthy spot."—*Does this witness prove the nuisance?*

3. The Rev. JOHN HOUGHTON, Rector of St. George's, Southwark, with reference to the vaults under his church, says, "I never perceived any unpleasant effluvia to arise from what had been interred there; I have one of my own children buried there; had there been any thing of the kind, I certainly should not have done that. There is not the least smell."—*Does this witness prove the nuisance?*

4. The Rev. Dr. RUSSELL, Rector of Bishopsgate, is one of those whose evidence is discredibly perverted in Mr. Mackinnon's Report. In the first page of the Report are these words: "Your Committee refer to the following extracts, as to the evil of the practice:—

"The Rev. J. Russell, D.D. (Q. 2,497): 'It is sickening; it is horrible.'"

Now, what are the facts? First, that, as to the effect of city sepulture, his experience is the contrary; and, secondly, that the words quoted refer to a wholly different subject—quarrels

about wages among the grave-diggers ! His words are these :—
 “Since I have been at Bishopsgate, I am not aware that the ground has been attended with any real inconvenience to the inhabitants.” “I am not aware that the vaults under the church in Bishopsgate are such as to create any inconvenience ; but certainly I cannot speak so favourably of the Great Vault, as they call it.” On the main point, this is all that the Rector states.—*Does this witness prove the nuisance ?*

On the next point he says : “The grave-diggers will not fill in the grave, unless they get 4*d.* paid. (A sort of extra perquisite.) There have been many disputes, and appeals have been made to me on the subject constantly.

“2497. It would be a source of great satisfaction to you, if all that was removed ?—Yes. It is sickening ; it is horrible.”

Such is the connexion in which these words are used. Had Mr. Mackinnon dared to distort Evidence before the Court of Queen’s Bench, as he has done here and elsewhere in his Report, it might have been the means of procuring him, spite of the privilege of Parliament, a lodging where he had little cared to sleep. As against Mr. Mackinnon’s object, Dr. Russell’s Evidence derives no inconsiderable force from the fact of his being Chairman of the Highgate Cemetery Company. It will serve further to aggravate the Hon. Member’s conduct, if we bring the Bishop of London to support the views of Dr. Russell, whom his Lordship preceded in the Rectory of Bishopsgate.

5. THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON : “I resided myself for eight years in the parish of St. Botolph, Bishopsgate, as Rector. For the first five years of that time, I inhabited the Rectory-house, which was situated *in the churchyard* ; the churchyard being very small, compared with the population of the parish, amounting at that time to about ten thousand ; and I was told, before I went into the house, that I should be annoyed, particularly as having a family of young children, from its proximity to the churchyard. However, I must say, that, during a residence there of five years, I *suffered no inconvenience whatever ; that I saw no remarkable violation of decency ; and that my children’s health was not affected.* Then I went to live in another part, remote from the churchyard, and I was not sensibly

of any improvement taking place in the health of my children, or that any particular benefit was derived from the removal."

His Lordship, after subsequently stating that the system ought to be improved, proceeds: "I still must think that the actual evils which have resulted from it have been *considerably exaggerated*: that in those churchyards in London, where due care is taken by the parochial officers to insure regularity of interment, on a certain system, which prevents the opening of graves within a given time after interment, *there is no real detriment to the health of the inhabitants.*—*Does this witness prove the nuisance?*

Why did not Mr. Mackinnon, in his Report, quote *this* part of the Evidence of this cautious and eminent witness? Is not the experience and opinion of such a witness alone sufficient to overthrow the monstrous fabric of unsworn assertions of ten thousand such nameless, homeless, vagrant, and idle men as supplied the main portions of the disgusting, horrible, and harrowing details which apparently so delighted the Committee?

6. The Rev. EVAN JAMES, Curate of St. Dunstan's, Stepney, "resides near a churchyard where more dead bodies have been interred probably than in any other churchyard." To the question (2711), whether he knew of "any circumstances either as affecting public decency or public health, arising from that number of burials," he replies: "I can safely state that I have never found any thing of the kind."—*Does this witness prove the nuisance?*

7. The Rev. HENRY HART MILMAN, now Rector of St. Margaret's, Westminster, and formerly Rector of St. Mary's, Reading, a witness only second to the Bishop of London,—for he, too, lived in a churchyard seventeen years,—was thus interrogated: "Generally speaking, do you conceive that there is any evil arising from it, [burial in churchyards,] so far as it comes within your knowledge?—*I should say, none whatever.*

"2765. Did the Rectory-house at Reading closely adjoin the churchyard?—It was *in* the churchyard.

"2764. Did you yourself or your family experience any inconvenience from your residing so near the churchyard during the seventeen years you were there?—*None whatever.*"—*Does this witness prove the nuisance?*

8. The Rev. JOHN TREVOR ROBINSON, of St. Andrew's, Holborn, was thus questioned: "You are aware of the object for which this Committee is assembled; will you have the goodness to state, generally, to the Committee what your sentiments are upon the subject?—I am not aware, from my own experience, of any nuisance having arisen, or any noxious effects having been produced upon the health of the population in the vicinity of the burial-grounds."—*Does this witness prove the nuisance?*

9. The Rev. WILLIAM WELDON CHAMPNEYS, Rector of Whitechapel, thus testifies: "Will you have the goodness to state, generally, to the Committee your sentiments on the subject of their inquiry?—On the first point I would say, with regard to the desirableness or the necessity of such a change, that I have had no personal experience of any injurious effects arising from interments in my own neighbourhood. The Rectory-house is situated at the side of the churchyard, graves running close to the party-wall on one side, and within the distance of a few yards on the other; and I have been there resident five years, and I have never found the slightest inconvenience; nor, in fact, have I been able, though in the habit of visiting dying persons in the parish, to discern that peculiar smell; nor did my predecessor's family, who lived there before me for thirty years, find any inconvenience, though the churchyard is very closely filled."—*Does this witness prove the nuisance?*

Here are no fewer than nine London clergymen, inclusive of their Bishop, who all concur in a declaration of experience and opinion entirely subversive of Mr. Mackinnon's leading position. Is nothing due to such a body of witnesses? Is Mr. Mackinnon prepared to treat their testimony as unworthy of credit? They are all resident clergymen, whose benefices are on either bank of the river, in the middle, at both ends, and on both sides of the city. Their evidence is, therefore, conclusive. It can only fail through the ignorance or the apathy of the public, or through the predetermination of individuals or a body to carry their point in spite of truth and fact, history and experience, reason and justice!

Will it be credited that, in the face of all this, Mr. Mackinnon asserts, in his Report, that his points are fully proved by

various classes of witnesses; and, amongst them, by "clergymen and high dignitaries of the Church?" You have seen the conjoint and cumulative testimony of the nine clergymen whose Evidence has been laid before you. Yet this gentleman talks of "high dignitaries of the Church" as his supporters! Who are these dignitaries? The Bishop of London, and Prebendaries Milman and Russell—the three strongest witnesses of the nine against him! With a man who is capable of drawing such conclusions from such facts, is it possible ever to settle a question by argument? To you we make our appeal, and more especially to the sound common sense of all right-minded Englishmen. Great Arbiter!

"Oppress'd with argumental tyranny,
Still routed reason finds a safe retreat in thee!"

September 15, 1842.

LETTER VI.

GENERAL EVIDENCE EXAMINED.

IN our last Address to you, we fully established against Mr. Mackinnon the charge of grossly misrepresenting the Evidence of the Metropolitan Clergy. How much soever these gentlemen may sympathise with his spirit, and sigh for the success of his ultimate object, they have too high a sense of honour, and too great a regard for principle, to aid him by untruth and concealment. Although that spirit is persecuting, exclusive, and domineering, and that object is, to crush Dissent, to exalt the church, and to swell the revenues of the clergy, Mr. Mackinnon professes to be a patriot and a philanthropist; he affects to be constrained by zeal for the public health and the honour of his country. He is professedly desirous, by a double benefaction, to establish claims to the gratitude both of the church and the nation. It is time, however, that the illusion should be dissipated. It is folly, it is fraud, it is an outrage equally on truth and on justice, on moral propriety and on legislative decorum. The Clerical Evidence already cited, even if it stood alone, would suffice at once both to expose and to demolish the de-

ceitful and preposterous project. So entirely destitute is the scheme of foundation in truth, that even the clergy, deep as is their stake in his success, have, with one voice, emphatically and honourably declared that the pestilent grievance on which he has based it, has really no existence. Both the Bishop and they have, doubtless, read his Report with astonishment, if not with indignation. We have reason to believe this to be the fact. The Report is actually an impeachment of their veracity. Without circumlocution, it gives them all the lie ! It is but just, therefore, to these gentlemen, that we should set forth the evidence of another class of witnesses, wholly disinterested, and possessing a measure of experience which entitles them to full credence.

1. Mr. HENRY HELSDON, who resided about thirty yards from the burial-ground of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, says, " I have never to my knowledge experienced any ill effects."

2. Mr. MOSES SOLOMONS, who resided in Vinegar-yard, Drury-lane, said, his " back staircase windows look into the church-yard." This son of Abraham, who seemed to be a somewhat malicious witness with respect to the gentlemen of the spade and pickaxe, gave evidence, on the main point, of the most decisive and remarkable character. He has resided during *fifty-seven years* on the margin of one of the most crowded and worst managed grounds in the metropolis, and the result of this extraordinary experiment is as follows :

" Q. 218. Does any exhalation or putrid smell arise from it?—Sometimes, in summer time.

" 219. Is that very great.—Yes, very great.

" 220. Have you ever found it affect your health?—No.

" 221. Nor the health of your family?—No."

This testimony of Moses quite confounded the Chairman, who, at Question 247, returned to the point by a general interrogatory, and obtained from the aged Jew an answer which only made matters worse :—

" Is that a healthy neighbourhood?—Where I live (on the margin of one of the worst graveyards) is very healthy."

3. Mr. THOMAS MUNNS fully corroborates the evidence of Mr. Moses Solomons as to health, while he contradicts him as to smell ; for his house, too, overlooked the same burial ground.

" Q. 586. Do you experience any effluvia or unpleasant smell from the churchyard?—Not that I could take an oath to swear came from the burial ground.

" 587. Do you enjoy your health pretty well?—I cannot say that I have not good health.

" 588. Is your family in good health?—Middling."

4. Mr. ROBERT CARR, an undertaker, and a very intelligent witness, was thus interrogated respecting Spafields burying ground :—

" Q. 658. Do you consider that the vicinity of these houses to this graveyard is injurious to the health of the people who occupy them?—I should not think so myself; because it is a wide space, a very large field."

5. Mr. GEORGE STARKINS WALLACE, a respectable livery stable keeper in Whitechapel, and a staunch Churchman, we apprehend, thus testifies :—

" Q. 1549. Do you live near the church?—Yes, close by.

" 1550. Have you been aware of any unpleasant effluvia from dead bodies buried in the churchyard?—I am not aware of any; our churchyard is rather open.

" 1551. Have you heard of any such complaints being made by your neighbours?—I have not."

6. Mr. WILLIAM FORD, beadle of the parish of St. Martin's, Ludgate, of which there had been some evil reports, was questioned as follows :—

" Q. 1932. The congregation have never complained of any effluvia from the vaults?—I am not aware that they have."

7. Mr. JOSEPH HARVEY, parish clerk of St. Andrew's, Undershaft, lives close upon the churchyard, and states, that, sometimes, when a grave is opened, a smell is felt in his house, with respect to which he was asked,

" Q. 1780. Have you suffered from it at all?—No; it has only been from the opening of a grave, and when the body is interred, it is filled up again.

" 1802. When the windows of the school-house have been open in hot weather, do you experience any offensive smell?—No; I do not think it is possible.

" 1803. Are the poor healthy in your immediate neighbourhood?—Yes, I never heard to the contrary. I have been in

the habit of seeing them constantly, and I do not think them otherwise, till they become very aged."—*Do these witnesses prove the nuisance?*

Dissenters of England! What say you to the united testimony of these seven credible witnesses? Adding it to that of the nine Clergymen set forth in our last Letter, can you resist the combined force of such a mass of evidence? Can you avoid the conclusion, however reluctantly you may come to it, that Mr. Mackinnon is practising a most serious deception on the British public? Sixteen credible witnesses,—all speaking, not from hearsay, but from personal knowledge, not to opinion, but to fact,—stand forth, and, with one voice, negative the fundamental position of that gentleman's Report! They successively tell the Hon. Member to his face, that there is not one word of truth in the representation which he makes of the effect of sepulture in large towns and cities; while he, in return, virtually tells them that he believes not one syllable they have uttered! How will you decide? Can you question the veracity of the clerical gentlemen, or that of the other body of respectable persons, all fully competent, from personal experience, to speak to the point? They have uttered the truth, or they have not. If they have, Mr. Mackinnon's Report is a falsification; if they have not, how shall we account for such unanimity in an attempt at public delusion? But there is no mistake: the truth of their views is confirmed by common experience. The allegation of Mr. Mackinnon runs counter to the conjoint testimony of both England and Scotland. In all the towns and cities of the United Kingdom, burial-grounds are to be found, appertaining both to the Church and to Dissenters, the bulk of which are closely surrounded with the habitations of man. Now, we contend that, generally, no evil has been found to result from this state of things. The experience of all concerned has been uniformly found to corroborate the evidence of the sixteen witnesses whose testimony has already been recited. We take our stand upon the rock of a nation's experience through many ages, and contend that Mr. Mackinnon's theory is without foundation in truth. In our next Letter, we shall deal with the evidence of his "Gentlemen at the head of the Medical and Surgical Professions."

September 19, 1842.

LETTER VII.

MEDICAL AND SURGICAL EVIDENCE EXAMINED.

MERE conjecture, in the case before you, is not to be taken because it is that of a medical practitioner. We must disregard every assertion not founded on facts, although it be clothed in the diction of science. In a matter so serious, every intelligent physician will hesitate to advance a single step in the absence of statistics carefully collected and thoroughly sifted. Statistics on this subject, however, we have none; and, therefore, the evidence of the Medical witnesses before Mr. Mackinnon's Committee must be taken for what it is worth, when weighed against universal experience. Dr. Lonsdale, of Edinburgh, has stated our principle in the spirit of Medical Philosophy, and laid down a safe rule of judgment. In a letter to Mr. Mackinnon, dated April 24, 1842, that eminent physician says: "The observations made in London, Glasgow, and Liverpool, would tend to the belief that disease is engendered by too close approximation to public Cemeteries; but the statistical information which we possess is too scanty to guarantee our stating that the health of individuals is necessarily affected by living in the vicinity of burial grounds."

To this enlightened testimony we shall add another, that of W. M. Meyler, Esq., of Gloucester, who, in writing to Mr. Mackinnon, after referring to the crowded state of the burial-grounds there, previously to their late enlargement, proceeds thus:—"I am not aware, however, that in the city of Gloucester any contagious disease has been traced to the opening of graves; nor would observation allow me to hazard more than a conjecture, that the occurrence of small pox, measles, scarlatina, and other contagious diseases, may, and does sometimes, arise in towns therefrom. But with these surmises only on my mind, *unsupported by facts*, I should still say, that, where burial-grounds are sufficiently extensive for the use of parishes, there would be no necessity for the removal to Cemeteries out of towns." In these two passages, we have all that can be either wisely or safely said on the subject. Whatever goes beyond this is folly,

or quackery, or something worse. We will now review the Medical Evidence contained in the Report; and, in doing this, we must steel ourselves against the influence of mere names. We respectfully ask for facts, instead of opinions.

1. Dr. G. F. COLLIER, on being asked whether interment in towns be not one of the causes of increased mortality in towns, replied, "No, I am not prepared to say that: I think that the causes of fever are extremely various; *that would be a question of statistics*, and I could not answer it."

2. Sir JAMES FELLOWES, M.D., seems to have been very desirous to aid the Chairman, but he could not get beyond declaring "it is highly probable it is productive, very often, of disease." For such probability, however, he assigns no grounds. Sir R. H. Inglis put the following questions:—

"Q. 1938. Have you ever been able to ascertain, professionally, the origin of *any* disease, either in the case of an individual, or in masses, as connected with the neighbourhood of places of interment?—No, I am not prepared with *any* cases; but I should say, as a general principle, it is extremely prejudicial to health.

"1939. You are not able to state any specific instance in which disease has been generated?—No, *I am not prepared to state any particular case.*"

What mysteries are here! "A general principle," unsupported by "any particular case!" What is meant by such language? What is the value of such evidence? Does modern science know anything of principles in the utter absence of facts? This distinguished witness discoursed to the Committee about the plague and pestilential fevers at Seville and Malaga, which led to another similar question, similarly answered.

"1942. Have you any circumstances which enable you to say that *any one* of those fevers has arisen from the immediate contact of the living subject with the effluvia arising from the dead?—No, *I am not prepared with any case.*"

It is difficult to conceive of anything more useless, or more ridiculous, than such evidence. Is Sir James, who is a magistrate of Hampshire, prepared to commit every boor who is brought before the Bench, on the *general charge* of crimes and misdemeanors, while the witnesses speak only of the probability

of guilt, but can swear to no "particular case?" If so, we pity those who are within his jurisdiction!

3. Sir BENJAMIN BRODIE, Bart., at the outset of his examination, confessed (Q. 2910) that he had "no practical knowledge upon the subject." This will be readily believed, since that eminent surgeon is found declaring, that town interments would be safe, "if you could bury twenty or thirty feet deep." Sir R. H. Inglis fairly speared Sir Benjamin, by putting the same question that he had to Sir James Fellowes.

"Q. 2919. In the course of your own immense professional practice, can you state to the Committee any instance in which you have traced fatal effects from the escape of gases from the decomposition of human bodies in churchyards or elsewhere?—No, I do not know that I could point to a particular case; *my attention has not been particularly directed to these subjects.*"

4. JAMES COPLAND, Esq., M.D., gives a lengthened and interesting lecture upon fever generally, but states not one fact which bears upon the point. He proves nothing; he lays before us a statement rather of his medical *faith* than of his medical knowledge. "I *believe*," says he, (Q. 2659,) "that the health of large towns is influenced by four or five particular circumstances; the first, and probably one of the most important, is the burial of the dead in large towns." Here is belief without a single fact, and probability without one solitary reason! Beyond this article of Dr. Copland's creed, we have nothing but a narrative of a person who caught fever from "a rush of foul air."

5. JORDAN ROCHE LYNCH, Esq., M.D., followed in the footsteps of Dr. Copland. He, too, descended with dignity on the varieties and causes of fever. He mentions a churchyard in St. Bartholomew's, about ten feet wide, by about forty or fifty feet long. This is the Pauper Burial-ground; and one of the parochial authorities told the Doctor, "that it had been three times filled, to his own recollection." This was, of course, a random saying; besides, we are not told the age of the party. The fact asserted might be true, and yet no impropriety have occurred. Dr. Lynch, who visited the "court abutting on this pauper burial-ground," says: "I find all the back-rooms jutting over this ground, having the cesspools, and the ash-holes, and privies

floating over in this court. I should state, when we go up to see a patient, we have to pick our footsteps through the excrementitious matter flowing down; the persons living in this part of the metropolis are in the habit of emptying their chamber-pots into this churchyard, and the smell is horrible." Here there is a mixture of monstrous abominations, which, of course, ought to be immediately put an end to; the existing law provides a ready remedy. But any number of such cases as this would not suffice to establish the principle of Mr. Mackinnon's Bill, nor would they call for the remedy which that Bill provides. This is a common, or rather an uncommon nuisance, which may and ought to be put down to-morrow, by the intervention of the local authorities, enforcing the existing law. It has, in reality, nothing to do with the main subject.

6. Dr. HOLT YATES does not carry the point a hair's-breadth further. When asked whether the present system of interment be not prejudicial, he replies, "I *think* there can be no doubt of it." *Proof* he assigns none; and, after answers to three more questions of no moment, he retires.

7. Mr. JOHN CHARLES ATKINSON, surgeon, proceeds with a tragical narrative of a grave-digger, who accidentally pierced a coffin with a pickaxe, and inhaled a rush of gas, which proved fatal first to him, then to his medical attendant, and lastly to the servant of the latter. Such is the sum of this gentleman's evidence, which, after all, has no bearing whatever on the principle of the Bill. The same things might have occurred in a cemetery on Dartmoor, or in a dissecting-room, or anywhere else.

8. Mr. GEORGE DORKIN LANE, surgeon, residing in Wilson-street, Drury-lane, had lived there upwards of seventeen years, in a house abutting on the burial-ground, and had attended many cases of illness in the courts adjoining. His answers to the main points serve only to demonstrate the absurdity of the Mackinnon theory.

"Q. 2306. Have you observed that the inhabitants of houses within the vicinity of a churchyard are more unhealthy than the inhabitants of other houses?—I have had a great deal of practice in those courts for seventeen years, and there is a great deal of illness there; the back of Crown-court incloses the burial-ground."

"2307. You cannot trace the illness of these persons directly to the grave-yard?—*No ; but those diseases are generally of a low character.*"

"2309. Can you undertake to say that persons living in the immediate neighbourhood of a grave-yard are more frequently ill than persons living at a distance?—*No ; I have not been able to make that observation.*" This is another of Mr. Mackinnon's best witnesses.

9. Dr. ROBERT BENTLY TODD gave evidence of the greatest importance, when he came forward to defend the site of King's College Hospital against the attacks of Mr. Walker and Sir B. Brodie, who represented its vicinity as most pernicious to the patients of that Institution. Dr. Todd opens with the declaration, "*that no inconvenience whatever has been felt from the contiguity of the grave-yard.*"

"Q. 2409. By the words, 'no inconvenience,' do you wish the Committee to understand *no sensible inconvenience* to the health of the patients within the Hospital?—*Precisely so.*

"2410. Have you reason to think that *any* disease has originated, or has been *aggravated* within that Hospital in consequence of the contiguity of the grave-yard in question?—*I am quite certain that nothing of the kind has happened.*

"2427. Is it your opinion that that situation is as healthy as one which is more in the open air?—I do think there is a good large volume of air, which the Hospital enjoys, *in consequence of the existence of that burial-ground*; I should be very sorry indeed to see the burial-ground removed."

Dr. Todd not only corroborates previous testimony, but cuts up Mr. Mackinnon's project by the roots. He shows that the said Hospital was formerly used as the workhouse of St. Clement's Danes, when it frequently contained 500 inmates at one time, and "that it was *a remarkably healthy workhouse.*"

Such, with the single exception of Mr. Walker, are Mr. Mackinnon's *Medical* witnesses. Was ever failure more complete? How Mr. Mackinnon can stand forth in the face of the Legislature, and, on the strength of such Evidence, ask for power to put an end to city sepulture on the score of *public health*, is to us most unaccountable! The conduct of

"Bedlam beggars, from low farms,
Sometimes with lunatic bans, sometimes with prayers,
Enforcing their charity,"

seems to us sagacity itself, as compared with that of the honourable Undertaker-General ! He reasons without data ; he concludes without proof ; he contradicts or overlooks the clearest facts, while he would set the legislative machine in operation to cure an evil wholly imaginary. Every step of his procedure is a riddle, an enigma, which can be solved only by its ecclesiastical bearings.

Mr. Walker, the Doctor of Drury-lane, is Mr. Mackinnon's principal reliance. But we must reserve the examination of this singular character as the subject of our next Letter, not because much space will be required for the demolition of his evidence, but because the monomaniac ardour which he manifests on the subject will enable us to show that the seat of the "disease" of which we hear so much, is in his own imagination.

September 22, 1842.

LETTER VIII.

EVIDENCE OF MR. WALKER EXAMINED.

GEORGE ALFRED WALKER, Esq., has, for the space of about five years, been very assiduous in his inquiries into the subject of interment. He has brought to that pursuit superior talents, an industry which never tires, and an enthusiasm which brooks no check. He has written repeatedly on the question, and he has talked about it without intermission. It has, at length, become in his own breast a strong passion ; and, on fire himself, he has succeeded in inflaming many others. Eager and impetuous, he declaims when he ought to reason ; and neglecting facts, he gives the reins to fancy. The spirit of the philosopher is nowhere apparent in his evidence. Credulous and imaginative, he carries every thing to excess. Extravagance of thought and of diction mark his evidence throughout. According to our sepulchral reformer, every thing is wrong, and he was the first

to discover it. He is not aware of any one who "has given the same attention" to this subject as he has himself. The result is, that he has made discoveries of a very unexpected character, for which, no doubt, the people of England will be duly grateful.

Mr. Walker has done enough for immortality in the single article of leaden coffins. He has had the rare felicity of correcting, upon this point, the error of many generations. Under question 794, he lays it down, that "it is quite useless to enclose bodies in lead;" at 872, he says, "The public will perhaps think that they do a very clever thing in putting the body of their friend in a leaden coffin, but it is not the least protection;" and again, at 793, he says, "Even leaden coffins placed in vaults cannot retain the destructive exhalations." Mark well this threefold assertion! Before we accompany Mr. Walker into the mysterious regions of pure chemistry, let us settle this point of practical handicraft with him. That intelligent witness, Mr. Ford, flatly contradicts him (1743), justly contending that "*no effluvia* can arise from them if they are properly soldered." This might suffice, but we must permit the Bishop of London also to rebuke the folly of the reckless and extravagant son of Galen. "I am persuaded," says the observant Prelate, "that, in nineteen cases out of twenty, a properly made leaden coffin effectually prevents the escape of any gases. I have been in a great many vaults where bodies have been buried in lead, without perceiving any unpleasant odour; and I do not believe that, generally speaking, any evil results from it. It has been the practice of the Church-building Commissioners, within the last twenty-four years, to sanction the construction of catacombs under churches arched with brick or stone; . . . and I have never heard from the clergymen or parish-officers, *in any case, that any inconvenience has been experienced from interments in such vaults.*" (2948.)

Whom will you believe, the quiet Bishop, or the effervescent Apothecary? This is not, however, we repeat, a thing of mere opinion, but a thing both of chemical analysis and of practical handicraft. The specific gravity of lead is 11·407; that of iron is only from 7·6 to 7·8; and Mr. Walker tells us, that a milled sheet of such a body is only a riddle, a reticle, or a corn-sieve!

Is such a man to be reasoned with? Then, as to the joint,—which, properly managed, is the strongest part of the fabric,—we have read his evidence to undertakers and plumbers of the first respectability, and all their remarks implied, that if the doctors of his neighbourhood knew no more of physic than he did of lead, the mortality round about Drury-lane—even were the reports of its excess as true as they are false—was at once accounted for!

Not only, it seems, are leaden coffins an absurdity, but we are all likewise wrong with regard both to the expense and the form of wooden coffins. “I think,” says our sapient Surgeon, “there is a great deal of unnecessary expense as to coffins; that the French are wiser than we are; they seldom pay more than five or seven francs for a coffin.” (872.) “It is exceedingly similar to an orange-chest, in the form of a roof at the top.” (879.) The Jewish and other importers of oranges may turn this hint to account. We are equally wrong, too, it would appear, with respect to our graves. We should use “as light a coffin as possible, and on no account should they be placed in pits.” He proposes that the English should bury men exactly as the Lowland Scotch plant potatoes. After the fashion of the French “*fosses communes*,” he would have a trench of any given width, and four feet in depth, “the earth being thrown up on either side;” and thus he would have the bodies “deposited side by side, (like salmon on a marble slab,) but not one upon another. The mortality of the day being received, the earth is thrown on the coffins thus deposited, until the *fosse* is filled, when another place is dug and occupied in the same manner.” (832.)

The zeal of Mr. Walker may be further illustrated by the fact, that he employed the witness Whittaker to procure him a quantity of gas from a coffin. This the witness did by boring a hole in the lid of a leaden coffin, and then applying to it the mouth of an India-rubber bottle. Whittaker, having obtained the precious load, set off with it to Drury-lane. Mr. Walker, overjoyed at the acquisition of such a treasure, set to the work of analysis; but, not having his process ready, he passed it through water instead of mercury, by which he lost a great deal of it. Our philosopher’s pains, on this occasion, added but

little to his chemical knowledge; although, rightly improved, they might have served to increase his practical wisdom. In one minute after the gas was brought into his shop, it escaped so rapidly that his sister and cousin smelt it on the third story, and fled from the house. The chemist himself became very ill, and kept his bed for a week—the lamentable but natural reward of his folly. And this is one of the awful facts on which Mr. Mackinnon grounds the principle of his Bill!

Mr. Walker went on discoursing to the Committee on the horrors of the tomb and the pestilential gases which rise from all the grave-yards of London, mingling together like the streams of a hundred fountains, and loading the air of every street with deadly poison, till the hair of the Honourable Members stood on end! Poor Mr. Mackinnon, it is believed, cried out,

“Oh! sight
Of terror, foul and ugly to behold,
Horrid to think, how horrible to feel!”

and then addressed the witness in the following strain of excited alarm:—

“Q. 833. Your impression is, that, wherever they open a grave in the grave-yards in this town, the opening it opens a VOLCANO for the emission of these gases?” “UNQUESTIONABLY,” was the awful reply! The prophet of terror, at question 836, however, rather abates the Vesuvian horrors of the stricken Chairman, by a figure more familiar than *Ætna* to English ears and eyes since Father Thames began to adorn his gigantic bosom with ornaments of Boulton and Watt’s formation. Speaking of the practice of keeping open graves, he says: “There is thus a funnel for the gas to escape!” The funnel by which Mr. Walker’s folly escapes must be of a wide diameter! If full-grown men will dance a whirligig, surely they might find some fitter place for their fantastic exhibitions than the tomb! There is an end to the operations of reason, if grave acts of legislation are to be founded on such nonsense. “Volcanoes!” “Funnels!” Has common sense abdicated her ancient throne in favour of a new occupant?

We have said enough to enable you to form some notion of our funereal philosopher, and will now proceed to examine his

evidence in behalf of the Mackinnon theory. The proof is worthy of the project. After Mr. Walker enumerated a multitude of places which he had visited, the Chairman said:—

“Q. 807. Speaking from your personal knowledge, in every one of those places you have enumerated, your opinion is, as a medical man, that the burial of the dead has been injurious to the persons living in the neighbourhood?—I am sure of it. It cannot be otherwise.” (What hinders it?)

“808. You have no doubt it affects their health?—I have no doubt it does.” (Is absence of doubt the highest proof?)

“810. You state from your own knowledge, as a medical man, that it affects the health of persons living in the vicinity?—There is no doubt of that.” (The contrary is certain.)

“811. Would you say, as a medical man, that the gases escaping from the grave-yards, and mixing with the general air, affect the health of the persons living around?—Yes.” (What would he not “say?”)

“812. Will you state whether you have seen disease arising from that cause?—I have; but it is sufficient to state, that the neighbourhood to which my attention has been especially directed is surrounded with grave-yards.” (Why sufficient? This proves nothing; it is mere evasion. You are required to show the effect, not to prove the existence, of grave-yards.)

“813. Can you say whether, in your immediate neighbourhood, there is any disease traceable to this cause?—Yes; and I shall prove by a very intelligent witness, that he has known persons affected by this cause.” (Observe again his evasive dexterity. He has no case of his own, but he borrows the one mentioned in our last Letter by Surgeon Atkinson.)

The Committee found it as difficult to fix Mr. Walker, as he did to fix the gas. He escapes at every point; and, it must be owned, diffuses an unsavoury smell to the moral sense. Mark the answers to the first, second, third, and fourth of the above questions. Was attempt at proof ever more preposterous? Was humbug ever more unblushing? “I am sure of it.” “It cannot be otherwise.” “I have no doubt it does.” “There is no doubt of that.” “Yes.” The whole case rests upon the questions to which Mr. Walker returned these most absurd answers. Do such answers bespeak knowledge, science, dignity? Or are

they the indications of an empty, ridiculous, coxcomical dogmatism? What judge, not a lunatic, would direct an issue on such evidence? What jury, not fatuous, would regard it? Yet, after all the bustle and bluster of "five years' " inquiry, and the examination of "upwards of ninety grave-yards," this is the sum total of Mr. Walker's "gatherings." He, nevertheless, obviously believes all he says. Our wonder is that he does not versify. He might easily achieve a deathless fame as the poet of the spade and the pick-axe. "Imaging," according to Dryden, "is, in itself, the very height and life of poetry." Then, of a truth, Mr. Walker is a poet of no mean pretensions. He has run to and fro among the tombs of the metropolis, peeping over walls and balustrades, through gates and gratings, surveying the spoils of mortality, till his fancy became inflamed, and

"At last, sublimed
To rapture and enthusiastic heat,"

he poured himself forth in an octavo volume full of the horrors of city sepulture! He rushes along in a state of mental bewilderment, blind to facts which all see but himself, and deaf to the testimony of the numerous gentlemen who contradict him. No report is too absurd, no statement too extravagant for Mr. Walker to receive; the more monstrous the more welcome! Hence, the worthy doctor of Drury-lane is often the victim of mischievous wags, who wantonly sport with his foolish simplicity. For example, at question 2092, he says: "I was informed that upwards of *five hundred skulls* had been thrown up in one day, and deposited in another part of the grave-yard, and that the grave-digger had amused himself by chalking the number on the wall." That Mr. Walker was told this we cannot doubt, since he says it; but no man of common sense, and much less a man conversant with such matters, needs be told that it is a mere jest. Men like Mr. Walker will not have far to go for lovers of the ludicrous, who, like the hero of Gay, will mock them

"Oft, in joking talk,
Of ashes, leather, oatmeal, bran, and chalk."

With Mr. Walker, all is evidence that savours of aversion to

church-yards. Mere aversion to them suffices with him to prove the presence of pestilence. As a proof of their deadly effect, he says he knows of "a gentleman refusing to take a house in the neighbourhood of Bishopsgate churchyard." Many people have no predilection for houses in the neighbourhood of church-yards, who never heard of Mackinnon's "Volcano," or of Walker's "Funnel." Few men have sufficient wisdom to delight in objects which put them in remembrance of death. The simple surgeon little thought that the Bishop of London would come forward and attest that he had lived a number of years in that very churchyard, together with his family, in perfect health!

We might add much in farther illustration of the enthusiastic folly and reckless credulity of Mr. Walker; but perhaps the case does not require it. He will probably learn, at length, that such work as he has undertaken calls for a little judgment, as well as much zeal; and that, in pursuing even a noble end, it might be advisable not wholly to disregard common sense, truth, and reason. But let us be just. In Mr. Walker, one thing pleases us,—his concern for Her Majesty! After a loud burst of laudable fury against the burying-ground of Buckingham Chapel, so long and so worthily occupied by our excellent friend, the Rev. E. A. Dunn, which stands in the vicinity of the Palace, he exclaims: "It is now exposed; when will it be denounced? Surely the guardians of Her Majesty's health will not risk the consequences of neglect." No wonder it was cautiously shunned by our sailor King, whose nautical experience had endowed him with a keen discernment between pure air and grave-yard gases! Let Sir James Clarke, with Doctors Chambers, Blagden, and Locock, beware of treasonable neglect!

September 26, 1842.

LETTER IX.

STRATAGEMS OF THE CEMETERY COMPANIES—EVIDENCE OF GRAVE DIGGERS
EXAMINED.

THERE are certain facts of which you ought to be apprised. Ever since the opening of the Cemeteries, a system of deceptive agitation has been carried on, in the City, on their behalf. ~~This~~

system has comprised many expedients ; among which, that of procuring the insertion of paragraphs in the newspapers has been the most efficient. There are hired parties, who have made this their especial business. They have succeeded in enlisting the principal organs of the daily press, and also the hebdomadal reptiles of the Sunday, the foul fraternity that live by pandering to the low passions of the coarse-minded multitude, always alive to tales of horror, blood, and murder. This business was pursued with especial industry, while Mr. Mackinnon's Committee were sitting. The chief abominations then recited, were most carefully retailed, from week to week, mixed up with Mr. Walker's "gatherings." Since the publication of the Evidence, by order of the House, nothing has been left unattempted, in order to give the utmost publicity to the exaggerations, fictions, and slanders with which the volume abounds. In addition to paragraphs in newspapers, pamphlets likewise have been published, professing to contain extracts from the Minutes of Evidence ; and persons have been employed to hawk them about the streets, bearing on their shoulders pictorial placards illustrative of their horrid recitals ! One of these lies before us, which we have compared with the Evidence, and which we find interspersed with exciting comments and wicked interpolations ! Not satisfied with this, fresh forgeries and new lies are continually poured upon the public ear. Of these the most recent appeared a few days ago in the respectable columns of the *Morning Chronicle*, as a letter to the Editor. Its subject was, the burial ground attached to the Chapel of Ease of St. Margaret's, Westminster. After various misrepresentations, which we shall pass by, the writer says :—

"A person residing in Little Chapel-street, which runs by the side of the burial ground to which I allude, and which, though it is filled with coffins to within a few feet of the surface, is still used *as a place of sepulture*—this person informed me, *that there is not a house in the street in which fever does not prevail*. (The italics are the writer's own.) Two females, residing next door to each other, died within the last few days, chiefly caused by the disgusting malaria arising from the burial ground opposite their dwellings. When one of these females was buried, the other was removed to the country in a cart ; the

smell from the grave is stated to have been almost overpowering. Mr. R., a respectable inhabitant, from whom I received the above information, states, that he is frequently obliged to close the windows of his house, owing to the smell from the burial ground.

“Surely, Sir, this is a dark spot on the fair name of this great country. It is opposed to decency, morality, and *religion* !”

Then comes an exhortation to the Editor “to use every exertion to banish metropolitan interment.”

After perusing this narrative, taught by our recent studies to doubt its truth, we resolved to inquire for ourselves; and, yesterday, proceeding to Westminster, we went over the burial-ground, and examined its condition,—a number of graves being open at the time; while parties on the spot politely answered our inquiries relative to the recent removal of bodies from the site of the new spire. All appeared to have been done with decency and order. We next went down Little Chapel-street, interrogating a number of the principal inhabitants, who had resided there, some two, some eight, some twelve, and others twenty years, in the same houses. We read to them, severally, the letter in the *Chronicle*, and their uniform reply was, in effect, that it was pure fiction. We then entered into the houses where the individuals had died, and read the letter to their inmates respectively. Their answer was, that the report was wholly untrue. The one died of consumption, preceded and induced by erysipelas; and the other, of a cold caught by exposure during one of the heavy rains which occurred some time ago. All the families we called on affirmed their utter ignorance of the existence of any sort of fever in the street or neighbourhood, and, with one voice, declared that the situation was most healthy, while they suffered no inconvenience whatever from the burying ground. Thus, a tale which has probably shocked many, turns out to be a thing of imagination, invented to answer base and sordid ends. Much, as we have already shown, of what is detailed in the Evidence taken before Mr. Mackinnon’s Committee, and published in the newspapers, is equally unfounded.

Much mystery hangs over the subject of sepulchral agitation. It is certain, however, that the Cemetery Companies led the way; but they had no idea that the Church would step forward

and launch on the stream which they had created. They hailed the idea of interdicting city sepulture by legislative enactment, above all things ; but they were utterly confounded by the proposal of creating Parochial Cemeteries. We shall postpone the further discussion of the matter till we come to address Mr. Mackinnon, when we shall make some curious disclosures.

Having proved that Mr. Mackinnon's Clerical Evidence does not support, but rather overthrows his theory, and shown that the testimony of his lay witnesses powerfully corroborates that of the clergy ; having demonstrated that the mass of his medical evidence is strongly adverse to him, and that what is not so, is altogether nugatory ; and having also shown that Mr. Walker, his crack witness, is entitled to no serious consideration ; we now proceed to deal with that class of witnesses who have mainly supplied Mr. Mackinnon with his treasury of horrors and abominations. Before attempting this, we need scarcely remind you, that evidence must be viewed in connexion with character ; but it may not be unimportant to apprise you, that, in conformity with Parliamentary practice, the witnesses who appeared before the Committee were all *unsworn*. They were allowed to talk away at pleasure, with no restraints except those of conscience, or of prudence, or of shame ; and there is reason to suspect that some of them were not much impeded by any such incumbrances. Mr. Mackinnon's first witness declares, from personal knowledge (Q. 23), that grave-diggers are " a low, depraved, drunken class of men." Mr. Walker also declares (802), that, " with scarcely an exception, they are drinking men." The witness Eyles says (357), " You can hardly find a man of that sort who is not fond of it (gin) ;" and Valentine Haycock, himself a grave-digger, declares (1000), " it is very seldom they are sober men." We will now exhibit a few specimens of horror.

1. GEORGE WHITTAKER deserves the foremost place among the class of witnesses now to be reviewed. This person is a great favourite of Mr. Walker's, with whom, in point of character, he seems to possess much in common. They are an illustrious pair. Mr. Whittaker has " seen coffins broken in the graves, and shovelled away to make room for fresh comers." Mr. Mackinnon, horror struck at this, cried out :

" Q. 401. And the bodies cut in pieces?—Decidedly so.

" 402. How do you mean?—Cut with the spade.

" 403. Were those very old coffins, or had they been placed in the grave only a short time?—I have seen both old and nearly new coffins destroyed.

" 405. Has this often occurred?—Yes; it is a case of almost every-day occurrence."

These declarations want nothing but truth to render them a recital of deeds the most inhuman, revolting, and abominable, that were ever perpetrated by the most depraved, brutal, and monstrous class of the human species! But, happily for the honour of our country and of our race, they are only the random utterances of a weak, vain, foolish man; the mere fictions of a brain which spurns equally the claims of truth and the control of reason. The evidence of such a creature is utterly unworthy of notice, were it not for its mischievous tendencies. It may, however, suffice simply to remind you, that this is the individual already mentioned, who affirmed that "the Dissenting Ministers get more by the dead than by the living." When pressed on that point, you will recollect he was compelled to retract his words, and to limit his remark to Enon Chapel. So, likewise, on the point before us, when urged to specify the grave-yards where these enormities occurred, he was forced (Q. 406) to limit this "case of almost every-day," and, as he sought to represent it, of general occurrence, to "Enon Chapel." But the chief atrocity of this romancer remains to be stated. At Enon Chapel, in the grave-yard of which he asserts these abominations to have been practised, there is actually *no grave-yard at all!* The whole of the interments took place in the chapel vaults. We have, therefore, done for the present with this witness, whose evidence teems with untruth and exaggeration.

2. BARTHOLOMEW LYONS amused the Committee with a series of tales which had no bearing whatever on the main subject. One of these may be cited as a specimen. "I was trying," says he, "the length of the grave, to see if it was long enough and wide enough, so that I should not have to go down again; and, while I was in there, the ground gave way, and a body turned right over, and the two arms came and clasped me

round the neck; she had gloves on and stockings, and white flannel inside, and what we call a shift, but no head."

Is this a true relation? Does Mr. Mackinnon himself believe it? Is this one of a class of evils which his Bill is intended to remedy?

3. EDWARD CHARLES COPELAND threw a little variety into the work of examination. In reply to the question (1376), "Do you think the occupation of grave-digging is very unhealthy?" He proves the affirmative by two kinds of argument: first, he says, "I am sure it is;" and, secondly, he adds, "I have seen them play at what is called skittles; put up bones, and take skulls and knock them down; stick up bones in the ground and throw a skull at them, as you would a skittle ball."

If this representation be untrue, there is an end of the witness; if correct, it further serves to illustrate the general character of the spade-and-mattock fraternity, and to show with what caution we should receive the testimony of persons so brutalized. It further shows how negligent the clergy and the churchwardens have been of their duty.

4. SAMUEL PITTS was an attendant at Enon Chapel, and has given utterance to some of the choicest pieces of folly and misrepresentation delivered before the Sepulchral Committee. The witness states, that the length of the chapel was fifty or sixty feet, and the breadth of it thirty or forty, and that the depth of the vault from the ground to the ceiling under the chapel floor is about six feet. In this very limited space, he "supposes" (135) there might be "twelve thousand bodies!" This monstrous assumption utterly staggered the Committee, who were not able to comprehend how there could be room for the half of twelve hundred, and they continued to pose him with questions as to its possibility. Shut up to retraction or to explanation, he supposes they might have destroyed the coffins, to make room for others; but then, said the Chairman:

"Q. 150. What became of the remains?—I do not know what became of them, unless they were shovelled altogether, which I *believe* to be the case in this place."—Had this base assumption been true, still the corpses were there, and it did not lessen the difficulty.

5. WILLIAM BURN rendered no mean service to Mr. Walker in the work of mystification. He readily solved the perplexing problem respecting the deposit of twelve thousand bodies in Enon Chapel, by charitably asserting (280), he had "no doubt whatever that bodies were slipped down the sewer." This conduct he ascribes to one of the most amiable, pious, and upright Christian ministers, who is now sleeping in the dust, and no longer able to defend himself against the attacks of foul calumny. Several of these witnesses will appear again in our next, when their credibility will be further tested.

So much for the grave-diggers! It now only remains that we dispose of the reported atrocities of Enon Chapel. We have visited the place, and intend, in our next Letter, to set before you Mr. Mackinnon's tale of horrors, and the results of our own careful inspection and extensive inquiries on the spot, in order that you may see how vile an attempt has been made to impose upon the public and the Legislature!

September 29, 1842.

LETTER X.

THE HORRORS OF ENON CHAPEL EXAMINED.

WE commence our tenth Letter under circumstances somewhat more encouraging than those in which we began the series. Up to that time, Mr. Mackinnon and his witnesses had things all their own way. Their evidence was uncontradicted, and his Bill was unexamined. It was then generally assumed that the former had proved the nuisance, and the latter provided the remedy. Not one journal, either in town or country, uttered a breath against either him or them. Now, however, men of all parties begin to look seriously at the matter. Few, indeed, yet appear to have examined the evidence, but many unite in the reprobation of the Bill. Assuming the partial existence of the nuisance, the universality of which is by no means proved, all agree that Mr. Mackinnon has not provided the remedy. The first to aid us in our arduous enterprise was our able and liberal

contemporary, the *Tyne Mercury*, which, although it has not yet fathomed the subject, has done excellent service. The *Morning Chronicle* next came boldly forth on Monday last, in an introductory article, which on Wednesday it followed up with a second, marked by great vigour, discernment, and liberality; and a third has since appeared. On the same day the *Times* broke silence, and emphatically condemned some of the main provisions of the measure. The *Chronicle* opens its second article by specifying certain points of the Bill "*which ought to insure its rejection;*" and closes by declaring "*that, without essential alteration, it certainly ought not to pass.*"

These facts will prove gratifying to the friends of general justice and of religious liberty. We hope inquirers will multiply, and that the press at large will do its duty. The subject is far from being so simple as indolent minds may imagine, and can be fully mastered only by diligent, prolonged, and diversified investigation. No such investigation has yet taken place. Seldom, indeed, have Select Committees laboured with less wisdom or to less purpose than this of Mr. Mackinnon. Never did an act of legislation call for a more severe appliance of the inductive logic; and never, assuredly, were its simple but salutary laws more entirely disregarded. Never were we more forcibly reminded of the weighty words of its immortal author, when he says, "*The inquisition by induction is wonderful hard; for the things reported are full of fables, and new experiments can hardly be made but with extreme caution.*" Such are the words of the illustrious Bacon, the father of the inductive philosophy. We recommend them to the serious meditation of Mr. Mackinnon, and of all juvenile legislators. A body of gentlemen duly appreciating them, would never have received such evidence as that before us, and still less would they have made such a Report upon it. The Report which Mr. Mackinnon presented to the House of Commons, and which recommends a measure that is to affect a nation, is founded on some three or four insignificant and much-exaggerated cases. If we remove from the evidence the Poor-ground in Clement's-lane, Portugal-street ground, and above all, Enon Chapel, what remains? Of the evidence of Walker, of Burn, of Pitts, and of Whittaker—Mr. Mackinnon's main props—the great and only telling subject is—Enon Chapel.

Let us glance at these witnesses in order. According to WALKER, it (Enon Chapel) is an "abominable place." He "knows" that "lime has been very extensively used in some places, particularly in Enon Chapel," for accelerating the consumption of human bodies.—"I know that lime has been inserted (in Enon Chapel) in enormous quantities, and that bodies have been consumed in less than a twelvemonth." You will observe that this language is unusually positive; and while the terms are most dogmatic, the facts alleged are most serious.

Now, we know Enon Chapel as well as Mr. Walker. Has he been there "twice?" So have we. Has he made some superficial inquiries on the subject? We have examined it to the bottom. We beg, at the same time, however, to state that we are neither the admirers nor the eulogists of that place as a receptacle for the dead; we only repair to it as the stronghold of Mr. Walker and his associates in misrepresentation, delusion, and slander. There will we grapple with them, and there, too, will we overthrow them. We respectfully ask Mr. Walker for his proof of the allegation here made. He says he "*knows these facts.*" Now, we affirm, on the authority of the family of the Rev. Mr. Howse, late minister and proprietor of the place, who lived on the premises during all the time that interments were made under the chapel, *that there is not a word of truth in the assertion of Mr. Walker.* They resent it as a foul and cruel calumny on the memory of a beloved husband and a revered father!

BURN, the carman, says there must have been "at least twenty interments a week;"—"it was *believed* that bodies were slipped down the sewer, otherwise the place could not have contained so many; this made the Commissioners strict in bricking it over;" he "has no doubt that *three times* as many persons die in the street near Enon Chapel as in any other part of the parish."

The recklessness of this man is equalled only by his folly. He richly merits the treadmill or the pillory. Mr. Howse's books of interment, which we have carefully analysed, show that the burials were at that time little more than *one-fourth* of what the witness states! In the best times of the vault, they never reached a half! And as to a sewer, it was not till long after the erection of the chapel that Mr. Howse knew there was such a thing as a

sewer under it at all. The witnesses, talking at random, all labour to produce the impression, that the sewer had previously been *open*,—one asserts it,—and that human bodies were floated in it by hundreds and thousands to the Thames, as the Norwegian foresters float logs of wood to the Baltic! Preposterous folly! A score of bodies would have gorged and stopped it up. But it was *not* an open sewer; it was a substantial, although small barrel-sewer, bricked over; and, as the witness himself confesses, the alteration was made, *not* to intercept the alleged nefarious practices of Mr. Howse, but to accomplish a very common object—to *enlarge it*. (261.) “It was obliged to be enlarged”—“they were obliged to dig deeper and wider to enlarge.” Then as to the treble mortality of the neighbourhood, the reply to our inquiries upon the point, from old inhabitants, was a shout of laughter. They said that, as to increased mortality, or even inferior health, the thing was all a fabrication, and spoke of Mr. Howse in terms of the utmost veneration. Thus much for the veracity of the Duke-street carter!

PITTS, the cabinet-maker, was a suitable companion to Burn, the carter. He started with the random assumption that “ten or twelve thousand” people had been buried under the chapel. The Committee preferred the larger number, and kept to it throughout; and then they set to the work of solving the horrid puzzle. The witness stated that the chapel was “about fifty or sixty feet by thirty or forty,” while the depth of the vault was “about six feet.” Mr. Mackinnon, not satisfied with these dimensions, most unaccountably endeavours to make little still less: while he takes the highest number of bodies, he actually abridges the superficial contents of the chapel, changing 60 to 59, and 40 to 29 feet.

“Q. 147. In a space of 59 by 29, with a depth of six feet, how can there be 12,000 bodies?—A great number were buried, in the first instance, till it got too full.

“148. Buried below that depth?—Yes.

“149. Your statement is, that, in the space of 59 feet by 29, they have buried as many as 12,000 bodies?—From what I have *understood*, a great many have been removed, to make room for others.

“150. What became of the remains?—I do not know what

became of them, unless they were *shovelled all together*, which I *believe* to be the case in this place.

"201. Can you account for 12,000 bodies being placed there, except that the coffins must have been destroyed, for the purpose of giving them more room?—No, I cannot; for I do not think the space would hold them.

"202. If this minister had not burned the coffins, he could not have had room to put in that number of bodies?—I think he could not."

Whose conduct, in the case before us, is the more disingenuous and despicable, that of the witness or that of the Committee? Was legislative inquiry ever so disgracefully conducted? Is it come to this, that a Committee of the Commons of England sit for the very purpose of slandering the characters of the dead and wounding the hearts of the living? Is it for men who affect so much reverence for the *dust* of the dead, to sport with all that is sacred in their *character*? If Pitts, the witness, was base enough to act such a part towards his pastor deceased, was it meet that Mr. Mackinnon should form his co-partner in traduction and calumny? How could Mr. Mackinnon and his Committee quietly sit and patiently hear a witness "understand," and "believe," and "suppose," and "suspect" away all that is dearest to man? This Pitts' conduct illustrates his spirit and character. He became an attendant at Enon Chapel early in 1828, and was a member of the church there assembling at the time of Mr. Howse's death; and now he comes forward, on the very first occasion that Mr. Mackinnon's Committee sat, to revile the memory and blast the reputation of his departed pastor! If the dead man, Howse, perpetrated the enormities ascribed to him, he was one of the foulest, vilest miscreants that ever disgraced society or outraged humanity in the character of a Christian minister! How could Pitts consent to look on the face or to hear the lessons of such a monster? He feels this, and hence at the close he says (203), "I did not believe that he did so at the time; but I have every reason to *believe* so since his death." Why did not the witness state those "reasons?" Was not this necessary even to his own defence? Was not his a course which hardly any thing on earth could vindicate? Why did he not, then, either keep aloof, or set forth the grounds of

his heartless, cruel, and treacherous conduct? Why! It is difficult to work impossibilities! He had no grounds to state. Nothing can vindicate or even palliate such proceedings.

The Committee, however, were much to blame, as well as Pitts. The whole question turned upon the number—12,000. Assuming the truth of the number, they laid a snare both for themselves and for the witness, and hence the complication of difficulties, absurdities, and falsehoods, that followed. Pitts says, he began to attend the chapel in 1828, and that, “for *six or seven years*, there were interments.” Now, mark! From Mr. Howse’s Burial Register, carefully and neatly kept by his own hand, and analysed by our pen, we shall lay before you the result of the seven principal years of interment. The total, of all ages, was only 3,503! Let us divide the number by the time, and the result, in round numbers, will be 500 each year. If, again, we divide the number for the year by the weeks, it will give, in round numbers, nine each week! Nine, only nine a week during the harvest period of the ground, while the lying witness Burn stated them to be “at least twenty a week,” when they were only as the gleanings after the harvest! We could go much further in the exposure of this witness, but we have said enough to demolish him for ever in the eyes of all upright men—enough, we trust, to cover both him and Mr. Mackinnon with lasting confusion.

WHITTAKER brings up the rear in a manner worthy of his predecessors. He, too, falls in with the area of 59 by 29 feet, and holds that there must have “been fully” 12,000 interments. He speaks to scenes he has witnessed there “within these two years,” while, in fact, the place has been closed nearly double that period! But we mention this man only as one of the four Enon Chapel witnesses, having, we trust, aided you in estimating his pretensions in a former Letter.

This mass of fictitious horrors so delighted the Committee, that a portion of them resolved upon a visit to Enon Chapel; which led to a scene as ludicrous as any that has occurred within our remembrance. On Friday, April 8, 1842, a number of the members of the Committee assembled, and, under the guidance, it seems, of Mr. WALKER, proceeded to visit the chief fountains of pestilence, St. Martin’s-in-the-Fields burial ground, in Drury-

lane, the ground in Russell-court, St. Clement's Danes, and Enon Chapel. Some days afterwards, three of the members of the Committee came forward, as witnesses, to state what they had seen. Mr. AINSWORTH says, that they were refused admittance into Russell-court burying ground, and likewise into Enon Chapel. The shrewd grave-diggers and sextons in St. Martin's, seem to have secured to themselves a good deal of merriment at the expense of the simple senators. "I perceived," says Mr. AINSWORTH, (1308), "a hole in the ground, and was informed that the hole had been bored into a coffin in order to allow the gaseous matter to escape." This excellent joke of the grave-digger, which a mere milkmaid would have relished, was solemnly believed by the sapient M.P., who could not see through the hole! Nor did Colonel Fox display much hereditary penetration. He says—

"I was struck with the holes made by the crowbars,—searchers as they are called,—in several places into the grave-yards, which, of course, must let out foul air."

This is very refined; the "searcher" is a mere rod of iron about three quarters of an inch thick, used for sounding the earth in spots intended for graves, to see that there is no obstruction from coffins already deposited; a process fraught with about as much danger as the dipping of a pen into an inkstand. The gallant Colonel (who inherits the *bonhomme* of his father without much of his sagacity or acuteness) makes sad work of the chapel: "With regard to Enon Chapel," says he (1409), "we were prevented going down into the vault; but I *thought*, through the crevices, I could perceive bones; there was nothing, at all events, but the planking." The Colonel must, surely, be endowed with a sort of second sight. We ourselves tried very hard to make the same discoveries, but in vain. "Crevices" we could find none; and we do think that neither crevices nor bones could be perceived by any man who used only his ordinary vision. After the Scottish bard had spent the evening with John Barleycorn, and sallied forth into the moonlight, he says—

"To count her horns, wi' a' my power,
I set mysel';
But whether she had three or four,
I could na' tell."

In distorting men's vision, mental mists are often as potent as the mountain dew !

But there was another Colonel in the party, whose sight was even sharper than that of the gallant Member for the Tower Hamlets. Colonel Fox saw the bones through the crevices in the floor; but Colonel Acton perceived them through "the violence of the keeper." The fact, however, is, that there *is* no "keeper;" and, as to the "violence," that, upon inquiry, resolves itself into the circumstance, that the party *demand*ed admittance instead of civilly requesting it, and that, too, without introducing themselves or explaining their errand. The persons whom they saw were busy preparing the chapel for a public meeting, and had no time to waste on idle intruders. Upon this, Colonel Acton, with admirable sagacity, jumps to a conclusion. "I *judge*," says he, with much solemnity, "from the extreme unwillingness, and violence, indeed, of the keeper of Enon Chapel, that there must be a very great body of injurious matter concealed." This beats the surgeon's 'prentice, who inferred that the horse had been eaten, from perceiving the saddle beneath the patient's bed! But what is the fact? Why, that Walker himself had been repeatedly permitted to pursue his "meditations among the tombs" alone in these very vaults; and we have authority to say, that the same privilege will be readily extended to Mr. Mackinnon, or any other gentleman of similar tastes.

Well, but there being so many "crevices" in the floor, and such "a very great body of injurious matter concealed," the chapel itself, into which, at all events, the Honourable Deputation obtained easy access, must surely have been charged with Walker's gases. Let us hear the gallant Colonel on this point. "Did you," inquired my Lord Mahon, "perceive any effluvia in the chapel?" "No;" was the frank reply of Colonel Acton: "the day happened to be remarkably favourable for carrying off effluvia: there was a brisk air; and another reason was, some of our party" (prudent men!) "were *smoking*, and that had a tendency to prevent our observing it!"

Appropriate conclusion! The whole affair ends in smoke!

October 3, 1842.

LETTER XI.

SUMMARY—SERIOUS ERRORS AND OVERSIGHTS OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE.

MEN and Brethren ! We have now finished our examination of Mr. Mackinnon's witnesses, and we call upon you to pronounce judgment on the merits of the evidence by which his Bill is supported. Have we proved the allegations respecting it with which we commenced our first Letter, or have we not ? We there asserted, that " the aim of the chief mover seemed to have been, to get together a mass of matter as horrible and harrowing as possible ; whether of the relators' own knowledge, or of hearsay, or of belief, or of suspicion, was a thing of small moment ;—that by far the most revolting portions of the Evidence have no bearing whatever upon the question ;—that not a little of the Evidence, even when pertinent, is utterly unworthy of credit ; while that which is beyond suspicion clearly contradicts it, and demonstrates the folly and injustice of the project." We contend, that never, in the whole range of jurisprudence or of litigation, was proof of anything more complete than that which we have adduced in support of these positions. Mr. Mackinnon brings forward a body of clergymen, with the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of London at their head, in the full expectation that they would support his measure ; but Balaam, the son of Peor, did not so miserably disappoint Balak, the son of Zippor, as did these gentlemen the Member for Lymington. The King called the Prophet to curse his enemies only three times, and three times only he blessed them ; whereas the Statesman called the Clergy *nine times to curse*, and nine times did they *bless* his enemies ! That evidence alone ought to have decided the question ; and yet, in the face of such evidence, Mr. Mackinnon has thought it decent to declare, that his Bill is supported by the " high dignitaries of the Church." In hopes of better success next time, he called a body of laymen, who only made things worse. Seven witnesses, all independent men, unite in supporting the evidence of the Clergy, and in demonstrating, ~~for~~

their own experience, that there is not one word of truth in Mr. Mackinnon's representations! Undaunted, however, by this second failure and double rebuke, he, under Mr. Walker's sage guidance, makes a third experiment. He next betakes himself to the Medical Profession. Of that respected class, nine chosen men appeared before the Committee; and surely never did a body of witnesses, in support of the worst of causes, more completely break down. It is not easy to say whether they did most to bring ridicule upon themselves, upon Mr. Mackinnon, or upon the profession of medicine. Then follows Mr. Walker, whom, we trust, we have proved to be wholly undeserving of public confidence in the representations that he has made upon the subject. Next we set before you the chief witnesses among the fraternity of the spade and pickaxe, a delineation of whose character is a sufficient reply to their statements. Finally, we have showed that the principal, if not indeed the sole supply of thrilling horrors and disgusting abominations, was derived from four small, and three of them irregular burial places,—one of which has been closed for years, another for a considerable period, and a third has all but ceased to do business,—and that the evils reported to have occurred there, have been most monstrously exaggerated, while there has been much positive and most flagrant falsehood.

All this have we done, we trust, to your entire conviction. We have, we think, most completely shown that Mr. Mackinnon has made out no case whatever. Abandoned by respectable witnesses of every class, there he stands alone, amidst a group of wretched grave-diggers, picked men, chiefly collected, and, if current report be true, partly cozened by Mr. Walker. It is certain, that some of them, immediately after their evidence became known, were dismissed from their situations as the penalty of their falsehood; that some were under warning to leave, at the moment they gave their evidence; that some had been recently dismissed, and were then idle and starving; that others say they received, weekly or occasionally, small sums of money from a gentleman whose name we have often mentioned in these Letters, with promises of *situations*, if they would "speak out," while such sums have since ceased to be paid, and the promised situations have not been forthcoming, and the

parties are wandering about in search of labour, cursing the Committee, Mackinnon, Walker, and all! On evidence so obtained, and of such a character, the Hon. Mover asked the Imperial Legislature to pass this obnoxious Bill!

We also charged the Committee, at the outset, with fatuous incompetency or most reprehensible unfairness in the examination. They not only allowed the witnesses to babble and talk at random upon all sorts of subjects, but actually *prompted them to flagrant improprieties!* Mr. Robert Carr, when examined in reference to a certain very serious point connected with Spaffield's burying-ground, was questioned thus:—

“ Q. 648. How do you account for that?—I cannot account for that.

“ 649. What is your *suspicion*?—I cannot say anything on *suspicion, unless I know the positive fact.*”

This manly and merited rebuke might have silenced the Committee; but they persevered as follows in their disgraceful course:—

“ 650. You *surmise* something?—That which I think, I may think wrong; and, therefore, it would not be right to state it.”

Even this honest declaration did not abash them. They went on:—

“ 651. Still, if you think anything wrong, and by giving your opinion (by lying?) the public might benefit by inquiring into the matter, it would be right that you should state it?—Unless I *know a thing positively*, I cannot speak to it; in whatever I may *think*, I may be wrong; but, if there was anything that I *knew*, I would speak plainly and openly.”

“ 654. Is there any doubt that there is *burning* sometimes?—I never saw any.”

“ 661. You do not like to speak without *being sure*?—Certainly not!”

Friends! ponder this passage; you may hence learn both the complexion and the object of the Committee. Surely the gentlemen forgot that they were a court of solemn inquiry. They also failed to remember that such inquiry, at every stage, necessarily affected both the property and the character of a large portion of her Majesty's subjects. “What is your sw

picion?" Suspicion has no right to a place in a good man's breast, especially in a court of justice. "Suspensions," Bacon has well said, "among thoughts, are like bats amongst birds; they ever fly by twilight; they are to be repressed, or at the least well guarded, for they cloud the mind." Our immortal Milton, too, thus loftily rebukes such conduct as that of the Sepulchral Committee. He says,—

" Though wisdom wake, suspicion *sleeps*
At wisdom's gate, and to simplicity
Resigns her charge ; while goodness thinks no ill
Where no ill seems."

"What is your suspicion?" Only think of Lord Denman thus interrogating a witness relative to the conduct of a fellow-citizen! In the event of such an enormity, the thunders of the Metropolitan Press would have roared and rolled to the very heavens! And shall a Committee of the House of Commons claim, even where honour and character are concerned, as their high prerogative, the right to do as whim, caprice, passion, or prejudice may dictate? In the name of law, justice, liberty, and honour, we denounce such conduct! Are "suspicion" and "surmise" henceforth to constitute the bases of enactments by which the lawful property of thousands is to be confiscated, and the highest privileges of millions of free-born Englishmen impaired or abrogated? Answer us!

Another point merits notice; the witnesses were, as far as possible, culled and selected to serve a purpose. With the clerical witnesses, Mr. Mackinnon and Mr. Walker could not so well tamper: they could only speculate regarding the gentlemen that were the most safe and the most likely to serve them: and to a great extent they erred in that speculation. It was somewhat otherwise with the medical witnesses, who were friends of Walker, and most of whom wanted not the will, but the power, to sustain this most extravagant project. The weapon of the one class was opinion; the weapon of the other, fact. The medical men said churchyards must be pernicious to health; the clergyman contended that they were wholly innoxious. The former reasoned from the principles of chemistry; the latter, from personal experience. The Bishop of London alone pounded the Doctors of Medicine as if in a mortar! They discoursed of

the mortal gases which emanate from the tombs, and maintained that they must be fatal to all residents in the vicinity : the calm Prelate inly smiled at their simplicity, and replied, that both he and his household had lived a number of years in one of our most crowded churchyards in the enjoyment of perfect health. The rest of the witnesses were mostly men of a lower grade, and more easily managed ; but the bulk of them knew so little of the subject as to be of slender service. The grave-diggers, therefore, were the last and only hope of our Highland Hannibal ! Take away the foolish and monstrous fabrications of these poor degraded men, and what would be the effect of all the remaining Evidence ?

Such a mode of conducting the inquiry is, in the highest degree, reprehensible ; but our complaint does not end here. First, the whole of the respectable body of Furnishing Undertakers has been set aside. A single score of this important class of tradesmen would have been of more real service to an upright Committee, who really sought the truth, than a thousand such witnesses as the bulk of those whom this Committee collected and mainly prized. Twenty such witnesses, selected from all the principal localities of the metropolis, would have been able to present a truthful and satisfactory report of all the grounds within the bills of mortality, and to furnish a mass of information upon the entire subject, which can be obtained from no other source. These, too, were the men to have spoken to the subject of new Cemeteries, with all the collateral points of the increased expense of sepulture, providing for the interment of the poor, and all kindred matters. The studied exclusion of such witnesses, therefore, is one of the most striking and ominous parts of Mr. Mackinnon's procedure, or rather of Mr. Walker's ; for he ruled the Committee. They formed the ciphers ; he, the integer. He sat beside Mr. Mackinnon, and whispered, and prompted, and practised all the dexterous parts of an able and experienced attorney guiding his counsel. Would not mere common sense have suggested that the undertakers must necessarily, on all points, be the most competent witnesses on such matters as interested the Committee ? Not only were they the proper persons to speak to the state of the grounds, and to remedial measures where such might be required ; but they were

also the only men to speak unerringly as to the effect of the churchyards on the mortality of the people who surround them. On this point, the undertakers are far better able to speak than the Doctors of Medicine. Alas! their guinea and five-guinea and ten-guinea visits are luxuries unknown to the swarming multitudes who people the precincts of the metropolitan sepulchres! Of the myriads that die there, few have to do with the M.D.; but all require the undertaker. And, when the physician does visit that class of the population who reside there, it is seldom more than once: for more can seldom be afforded; and it is but rarely he knows whether his patient lives or dies. Common surgeons, of good practice, are far better judges than the physician; but even they are much inferior to the undertaker. There is much death where there is but little surgery; the undertaker, however, can nowhere be dispensed with. To him, therefore, ought the Committee to have repaired, had they wished for the true statistics of comparative mortality. We happen to know something of this class; we have also ascertained the opinions which prevail among them concerning this Bill, and the evidence by which it professes to be supported; and we assure you, that they designate the former as an impracticable absurdity, and the latter, as far as Mr. Walker and his grave-diggers are concerned, as a mere jumble of nonsense, folly, and falsehood.

Another ground of complaint here, is, that no means whatever were taken by Mr. Mackinnon to ascertain the true condition of the Dissenting burial grounds, and the effect which his Bill would have on Dissenting property. His object being simply their destruction, he required, of course, only the knowledge of their existence. His conduct here is exceedingly aggravated by facts to which we are privy, and by which we can prove that he was fully apprised of the ruinous results of his Bill to many of the most important congregations of the Nonconformist community. He laboured not in the dark; he perpetrates all the injuries with which his Bill is fraught in the full light of the clearest and most abundant information. Its fatal influence to you is his boast and his glory. He is, therefore, your declared adversary!

Dissenters of England! awake to your danger! This Bill is

very largely a question of property ; it is still more largely a question of civil and religious liberty. If you allow it to pass, the day on which it obtains the Royal Assent will be the most rueful that has risen upon our interests for a century ! Every congregation in the land, whether having burial grounds or not, is deeply and fearfully concerned in the measure. If you allow it to pass, posterity will execrate your memories, and mourn the day that you were born ! Rise up, then, and perform your duty to yourselves, to your children, and to the generations which are to come ! Let sleep give place to vigilance, and indolence to effort ! A Committee is already formed which will lead you on. Hasten to support them !

October 6, 1842.

LETTERS

TO

W. A. MACKINNON, ESQ., M.P.

LETTER I.

ON THE CHARACTER OF THE WITNESSES AND THE NATURE OF THE
EVIDENCE—A SPEECH FOR THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

SIR,—As a British Senator, it ought to be your ambition, that your public acts should merit and obtain the approbation of mankind. But, in order to this, they must be consonant with moral and political justice, with right reason and true religion. Deeds of an opposite character cannot lay the foundation of general respect. But if, in addition to temporal wrong, a statesman shall violate the rights of conscience, shall oppress and trample in the dust a portion of mankind, that he may elevate and aggrandise the rest, instead of honour, he shall have infamy, and, instead of praise, execration. And if, with wrongs in regard to property, and wrongs in regard to conscience, be blended a contempt for those holy emotions with which mankind cherish the memory of departed friendship, the perpetrator of the triple outrage has filled up the measure of his anti-social misdoings.

Sir, we have been led to these thoughts by a deep and careful scrutiny of the Evidence taken by the Committee of which you were Chairman, in relation to the "Health of Towns," and of the Bill founded on that Evidence, and by you brought into the House of Commons. We have already, we conceive, demonstrated the utter insufficiency of that Evidence to constitute the basis of any measure, to say nothing of a measure so preposterous as yours. The volume, from beginning to end, is, for the most part, a loose jumble of incoherent, imbecile, impertinent

gossip; and the few and rare exceptions uniformly make against you. The inquiry was but a mockery of investigation. Its defects were numerous, and every one fatal. There was not, it would seem, a man on the Committee capable of taking evidence: they were all either entirely ignorant of its laws, which, at every step, they violated, or utterly regardless of them. Again, there was no provision for cross-examination; while the witnesses, the chief of whom were grave-diggers, were unawed by the terrors of an oath. Obvious exaggerations were not repressed, but rather fostered; and he who drew the longest bow was obviously the prime favourite. Nay, absurdity arrived at such a pitch, that even the better Members of the Committee vied with the worst class of the witnesses in their extravagances. Colonel Fox himself was all but a rival of Juvenal's witness, who was ready

“To swear he saw three inches through a door,
As Asiatic evidences swore.”

In the selection of witnesses, you showed the utmost partiality and exclusiveness. While the law is to affect the whole of the community, the witnesses were taken from a single section of it. Why were Proprietors of non-parochial burial grounds, Trustees of Dissenting chapels with vaults and grave yards, and Dissenting Ministers of every class, overlooked? Were you not well aware that your measure was most extensively to affect the comforts, the interests, the feelings, and, in not a few cases, the fortunes of these classes? Did you not know that some of the places of sepulture which you propose to shut up, have been purchased and prepared at a cost of from twenty to thirty thousand pounds; and that, by their extinction, honest men and virtuous citizens might be brought to beggary? Were these considerations beneath the notice of a legislator? In the course of the inquiry, they were accidentally once and again thrust upon your notice. You were also, we are credibly informed, apprised of them from other sources. But these things were, in your eyes, impertinent trifles; and, in the Bill, you could not afford space for even a passing allusion to them. The Evidence abounds with pathetic references to the injured rights and sacred claims of the clergy, and to the cruelty and injustice of closing

their grounds without ample compensation. On this subject, the Report echoes the Evidence, and the Bill re-echoes the Report. Yes! it was next to sacrilege to impair in the least the comfort of a single Clergyman; but, though a hundred Dissenting Ministers were ruined, it would call for neither compensation nor compassion. Sir, is this justice? You must have learned from Locke, that "the nature and office of justice is to dispose the mind to a constant and perpetual readiness to render to every man his due." Why have you forgotten what is "due" to the Dissenters of England? Has your reading taught you that they are beyond the pale of the British Constitution?

But to return to the principle on which you selected your witnesses. Why were those of them practically acquainted with the business of interment taken exclusively from the lowest class of funeral functionaries? How came you so carefully to set aside the respectable body of metropolitan furnishing undertakers? Were not these, above all others, the men best qualified to speak to the state of the burial grounds, with respect both to fulness and to order? Are not they, likewise, a class of tradesmen whose integrity and intelligence are alike unquestionable, and whose evidence, therefore, would have deserved peculiar attention? When you required information as to the mischiefs arising from the too protracted retention of corpses above ground, were not they the proper, if not the only parties to give it? When you wished to ascertain the probable increase of expenses that would result from burial in the proposed Cemetries exclusively, were not the persons who would have to perform the work the parties to be interrogated? When you desired to know the best method of providing for the interment of the parish poor, who so fit to be called to your counsels as the undertakers? When you wanted to be furnished with the statistics of comparative mortality, why not have summoned to your assistance the only class who could give them? You not only, however, set at nought the undertakers, but sought the information which they alone could give, from men who knew as little of the subject as yourselves. Of this ridiculous course, we have a pretty example in the case of James Anderton, Esq., "one of the Common Council." To this civic Solomon you said:

"Q. 1511.—Have you turned your attention to the state

the churchyards in the metropolis?—I have, but *more from report than from personal inspection of them, perhaps.*”

Why, Sir, did you call such a witness? Could the slightest importance attach to opinions founded on mere “report?” How came you, then, after this naïve confession of utter ignorance, to question him again, and still further expose his folly by such a question as the following?

“Q. 1519.—What is your opinion of the general state of the churchyards in the metropolis?—My opinion is, that *they ought not to be permitted to exist any longer; that they are disgraceful to us as a civilized country.*”

Sir, you assert, or rather you assume, in the preamble of your Bill, that Interment “within the precincts of large towns in England, is injurious to health, and frequently offensive to public decency, and it is expedient that the same should be prevented.” We entirely dispute the premises, as applied to England at large, or even to London alone. You have wholly failed to establish your case; and, your preamble being unproved, there is no ground for your Bill. The point alleged, as to health, has been abundantly disproved by your only trustworthy witnesses; but, had it been otherwise, and had they all even sworn in the terms of your preamble, still, that would not have altered the real facts of the case. In this matter there is nothing mysterious or recondite. The aid of the Chemist and the Surgeon, of the M.D. and the M.P., are quite unnecessary. The humblest hodman of the Emerald Isle, who earns his hard-won bread among the builders of our Babylon, and has his local habitation in St. Giles’s, is perfectly able to decide the question. He has only to perambulate the city, and with open eyes to inspect its graveyards, that he may ascertain the folly and falsity of your conclusions. Were the facts as you would have them, should we require Select Committees to take evidence in support of them? Would not the whole inhabitants of every city be the unavoidable and melancholy witnesses of facts so overt, so general, so terrible? Were the facts as you would have them, would they not, many ages since, have forced themselves on the attention of mankind, clothed in the terrors of pestilence and death? Were the facts as you would have them, inquiry about their truth would be superseded by inquiry about their remedy. Laying aside Walker and his mortal gas, Whitaker and his India-

rubber bottle which contained it, why, in your place in the House of Commons, did you not strike out in some such strain as the following?

“Mr. Speaker, I rise to call the attention of Honourable Members and of Her Majesty’s Government to the fearful condition of our native country. The evils of intramural sepulture, which, for many ages, have been constantly increasing, have now reached a pitch which calls for the immediate interference of this Honourable House. Not a moment is to be lost. This question ought to take precedence of every other. The consequence of delay for another year may be most disastrous to the health of the nation. England is covered with fountains of pestilence, which, at any moment, from some latent cause, may overflow, filling the land with dismay and desolation! The Metropolis, in which we now meet, may, in one week, be clothed with the terrors of 1665, when well nigh one hundred thousand men were swept into eternity! But, Sir, this is not simply a British question. We hold in our custody the health of Europe and of the world. On the wings of our trade, the destroyer may speed his way to every country, filling it with death and clothing it with mourning! The spirit of philanthropy, therefore, combines with the spirit of patriotism to urge the adoption of means to prevent a catastrophe so fearful. The unusual warmth of the present year also affords a timely warning. If such seasons continue, our climate will be assimilated to that of Egypt; England will speedily become another Lemnos; and some British Thucydides will have to record ravages in London far more dire than those which converted Athens into a charnel-house, filling all Greece with distress and death, and the world itself with astonishment and horror!

“Sir, the Committee which the House was pleased to grant me, has concluded its labours; the Report and Minutes of Evidence are in the hands of Honourable Gentlemen, who, I trust, will, on the strength of that Evidence, now give me leave to bring in a bill to carry out the recommendations of the Report. But, if Honourable Gentlemen have not yet been able to read the Report or the Evidence, I have only to appeal to facts with which, alas! all are but too deeply conversant. Look, Sir, at residents in the vicinity of our City grave-yards. In the

pallid countenances, in their broken health, in their feeble progeny, and in their extraordinary mortality, you may discern the deadly miasmata which they are hourly breathing! Ask the holders of property adjacent to grave-yards, and they will tell you, that their tenants, terror-struck with the vast, unceasing, and augmenting mortality which reigns around them, are abdicating their houses by thousands; that property there can neither be let nor sold; and that it is falling into a state of ruinous dilapidation! Ask the doctors, and they will tell you that the bulk of their practice lies in the circles which surround the tombs! Ask the managers of the dispensaries, and they will inform you that the majority of their applicants are from the vicinage of the sepulchre! Ask the committees of hospitals, especially of those for fever, and they will tell you that their wards are mainly filled with cases from around the churchyard! Ask the local sick-relief societies, and they will tell you that their principal drain lies around burial-grounds! Ask benefit societies, and they will inform you, that, taught by sad experience, they have ceased to admit members living within at least half a mile of any place of sepulture! Ask the insurance offices, and you will learn that they grant no policies of life insurance, unless on terms of triple danger, to persons living within one thousand perches of a churchyard! Ask the undertaker, and he will assure you that the richest ridge of his wide-spread and endless harvest, lies around the habitations of the dead! Let gentlemen consider these uncontradicted and appalling facts—and the catalogue might be greatly enlarged—and I count with confidence on their assistance to perfect and carry this great measure for the salvation of our own country, and the welfare of all nations.”

You, Sir, need not be told, that such a speech, if it could be uttered amidst the shouts of laughter which it would call forth, would be deemed a piece of most extravagant burlesque; so contrary to truth are the whole of its allegations. But this is not a whit more extravagant than your Evidence; it is, indeed, only your Evidence concentrated and classified; and only a state of things approaching to this, could demand or warrant the introduction of such a measure. That part of the Evidence on which your Bill rests is a fabrication; and the Bill itself is an absurdity. If you determine to persevere, the public will de-

mand a fresh inquiry, conducted upon very different principles; and such an inquiry will lead to very different results.

Thus much for the subject of "injury to health:" and, if there be offences to "public decency," your Bill is not required for their correction. The existing powers and authorities are amply sufficient to meet every exigency of this description.

October 10, 1842.

LETTER II.

CLERICAL TAXATION OF CEMETERIES—CLERICAL COMPENSATION—FAMILY GRAVES—DESECRATION OF BURIAL GROUNDS.

SIR,—While your Bill proposes to close all existing places of sepulture, under the circumstances specified, it particularly exempts all Cemeteries established under the authority of an Act passed specially for that purpose, within ten years prior to the passing of your Bill, whatever be their state or position. This is a dexterous stroke. Is it your own or the Bishop's? Unreflecting persons may, perhaps, think it a generous exception; but assuredly generosity makes no part of your Bill. The problem will be readily solved, however, when we apprise them, that every Act which has been passed within that period, constitutes the ground to which it refers, a spontaneous harvest for the clergy! All those Acts are before us; and we find that the Act for Kensal-green, to the north-west of London, which was the first Cemetery, passed just ten years ago. This Act was procured by the "General Cemetery Company," and governs their proceedings wherever they may construct places of interment. The next Act was obtained, in 1836, by the "London Cemetery Company," and authorised them to establish Cemeteries "northward, southward, and eastward of the Metropolis." This Bill, we shall see, even enhances the interests of the clergy. The third Act was that procured by "The West of London and Westminster Cemetery Company," in 1839, which enormously enhances the privileges of the ghostly Corporation. The fourth Act was passed in behalf of the "City of London and Tower Hamlets Company," which is equally oppress-

clerical burdens. These facts solve the mystery of "ten years" and an "Act." The time is of value only as connected with the Act. The Bishop of London, during that period, has taken care that no Act should pass the House of Lords which did not pay a heavy tribute to the clergy; this was the unalterable condition; and even respectful refusal entailed certain discomfiture. "Ten years" comprise the mystic cycle. All grounds established eleven or twelve years ago, whether conjoined with or apart from chapels, may be well situated, well conducted, and every way unexceptionable; but, as they yield no gold for the surpliced sons of Mother Church, they must perish!

The progress of clerical rapacity, as traced in these Acts, is very remarkable, when viewed in relation to the peculiar principles of your Bill. If any thing can illustrate the real character of the Established Church, and excite the public alarm at your measure, it is a simple statement of the facts of this history.

The Act relating to the Kensal-green Cemetery provides, that, for every corpse brought from parishes within the Bills of Mortality, within the diocese of London, or from the parishes of St. Marylebone, St. Pancras, Paddington, or St. Mary Abbots, Kensington, and buried in the vaults, catacombs, or brick graves of the consecrated ground, the Company shall pay to the clergymen respectively, a fee of Five Shillings; and, if in the open ground, of One Shilling and Sixpence. This is not amiss, seeing that such clergymen are required to do nothing whatever in the way of earning these sums. Their happy province begins with receiving, and ends with spending them. The genius of cupidity, however, became sharpened by reflection; and, accordingly, the Bill of the "London Cemetery Company" provides, that, in addition to the limits of the Weekly Bills of Mortality, bodies brought from "any Parish or Ecclesiastical District or Division, the Church or Chapel whereof shall be within the distance of *five miles* from the Cemetery," shall be taxed to the same amount as at Kensal-green, for the benefit of the clergy. This is a great improvement. Success begets confidence: and hence the Bishop of London, the next year, inserted in the Act of "The West of London and Westminster Cemetery Company" a clause so perfectly monstrous, that, were the Act not before our eyes, we should deem it impossible that

such a clause could have received the sanction of the Legislature. It is the following :—

“XVIII.—And be it further enacted, That, upon the interment of *every* person within *any* part of the consecrated part of the said Cemetery, who shall appear, by the books of the Company, to have been removed, for the purpose of such interment, from any Parish, or Ecclesiastical District or Division of a Parish, within the distance of *ten miles* of the said Cemetery, the said Company shall pay unto the Incumbent for the time being of the Church or Chapel of the Parish, or other Ecclesiastical District or Division of the Parish, from which such persons shall be so removed, the sum of TEN SHILLINGS; and also to every person, at the time of passing this Act, holding the office of the Clerk of the Parish, or other Ecclesiastical District or Division of the Parish, from which such person shall be removed, the sum of ONE SHILLING.”

Sir, this is alike original and bold. The distance is doubled as compared even with Highgate; the fee in the vaults, &c., is doubled; the distinction between the vaults and the open ground is annihilated; Ten Shillings is demanded for all burials, without distinction of place, and no consideration is made of the rank or circumstances of parties! The distinctions of age, too, are lost: the infant of a week old and the man of grey hairs are put upon a level. The parish clerk, also, is admitted to share the spoil! In the history of ecclesiastical extortion, fertile as it is in examples of unblushing rapacity, we have seldom met with anything equal to this. Why, this mere tax for the clergy is equal to the whole charge of a burial in some of our best Cemeteries. The entire charge for an adult in Abney Park, is 10s.; for a child, 8s.; but, in the case before us, the clerical impost alone on the little dust of an infant that has just seen the light, is 10s.! This cruel exaction was the result of deliberate counsel between the Bishop and his clergy, as he avows in his own evidence. Are these, then, the persons in whose hands you propose to place the whole management of your new system of sepulture? Are these the persons whom you would empower to “fix and settle a Table of Fees to be paid on interments?” We do trust the eyes of the country, if not your own, will open to the injustice of this most nefarious proje

As this point will be discussed more advantageously at a subsequent stage of our examination, we shall, for the present, drop it. What has now been said, may serve to illustrate the character of your exception in favour of Cemeteries established within "ten years," and by "Act of Parliament;" and to show that small praise on that ground is due either to you or your clients, the clergy. You take for your example the Beys of the East, who first plunder the caravan, and then grant it a passport through the desert!

Let us now, leaving the exception, proceed to the rule. You propose to prohibit all interments within the distance of *two miles* from the public lamps and paving of the Cities of London and Westminster, or the Borough of Southwark, or within *one mile* of cities, towns, or boroughs, containing a given number of houses rated at ten pounds or upwards: or within the distance of *one mile* from the boundary of any place of the extent of fifty acres, containing more than five hundred houses rated at ten pounds or upwards.

Sir, this proposition is fraught with a multitude of momentous consequences. How came you to take so limited a view of its general bearings? In your Report, you profess great concern about "vested rights." You are shocked to think of even the slightest infringement of the privileges of the parochial clergy! Favoured men! The health of the British metropolis, the salvation of the whole empire, would be far too dearly purchased at the expense of a single comfort to the most insignificant among them! Marvellous fondness! Your *quondam* friends, of the mountains of the north, will be sorely puzzled to account for your devotion to the English mitre. The brave and high-minded men of the Clan Mackinnon, whose fathers stained their and your native hills with their blood, in defending their civil liberties and their Presbyterian religion against the cruel invasion of "Black Prelacy," will blush to witness you, Sir, the head of their Clan, so entirely forgetting, throughout this whole business, what is due to your own manhood, to your magnanimous ancestors, and to the land of your birth. Those hardy and chivalrous men will feel degraded by your cringing and despicable deportment, both to the Bishop and to the clergy. They will mark and scorn this servile and fawning spirit, as displayed

by you when the imperious Prelate gave his evidence. It is likewise obvious, in your Report, in which you, nevertheless, to serve your end, repeatedly pervert his testimony, while you lick his jewelled hand. Throughout your Bill, also, it is offensively prominent. "Particular attention," says your Report, "ought to be paid to the peculiar situation of the parochial clergy, whose chief source of income, in some cases, is derived from fees received from interments. Of these fees it would be great injustice to deprive the parties." No doubt of it; their claims are indefeasible. But your humanity and justice do not end here. Everything appertaining to the church is vested. Even the twittering swallows have a "vested right" to build their nests in the belfry! "The effects of the contemplated change on the emoluments of the parish clerks, is also a matter to be taken into consideration." Your benevolence increases as you advance: in your Bill you extend your sympathy to the very sexton!

We should like much to know, how, amidst all this solicitude to preserve "vested rights" intact, you excluded from your thoughts all regard to the rights of the class of people called Dissenters? A stranger might be led to suppose you were not aware of the existence of such people. But this cannot be, since we find you, in your Bill, carefully providing indignity for the *dead* Dissenter, and taxation for the living one! In the Evidence, too, we observe, and have in previous letters reprobated, your anxiety to have it proved, that the profits of sepulture are one of the main supports of the Dissenting interest; that, but for these, many of its metropolitan chapels would never have existed; and that their continuance chiefly depends on the same source. Sir, if these allegations be true, will not your Bill bring on the Dissenters of England a most grievous calamity? Will it not prove the ruin of all or most of their town and city chapels? Is such an event, assuming its probability, or even its possibility, beneath your notice? If it inflict severe pain on multitudes, is it not cruelty? If it destroy property, is it not injustice? If it impair the religious privileges of numbers of Christian men, is it not impiety? On what ground, then, do you rest your right, or consider it your duty to propose a measure which is revolting to justice, honour, and religion? Have you, a senator, to learn that, next to life, it is your first

duty to protect property? But you deliberately destroy it, while your deed is accompanied with neither explanation nor apology.

Let us calmly look at this matter of property, as it relates to families. Your Report, indeed, recommends the exception of "family vaults already existing, the same partaking of the nature of private property, and being of limited extent." Why this style of mitigated expression? If we purchase a vault under a chapel, or a grave, with the power to use, or to reserve, or to sell it, is not such vault or grave, in the fullest sense, our "private property?" What can be more so? Do then tell us why, without recompence, you take it from us? On what ground do you withhold compensation? But, Sir, this is the lowest view: your Bill is not merely a piece of injustice, it is an act of inhumanity. It inflicts wrongs which gold cannot repair. Is it, in your mind, a light thing to separate families in death? Why do you touch a family grave more than a family mansion? Why dare you practise upon the dead that which you would not even dare to imagine with respect to the living? Why deprive parents and children of the awful privilege of sleeping in the same sepulchre? Sir, such conduct is fraught with consequences the most solemn and responsible. The tomb is not a fit place for the wanton freaks of tyros in legislation! Such unhallowed liberties with sacred dust may be endured in infidel France, and among the slave subjects of the despotic governments of Europe, but we do trust it will not be suffered in England! Surely the spirit of her people is not yet so fallen! Her feelings of reverence for the dead are not yet so blunted!

While we thus remonstrate with you on the impiety of your conduct, and denounce its injustice, we feel that we are pleading not simply for Protestant Dissenters, but also for Churchmen. You have assumed the attitude of the ruthless spoiler of the common sepulchre! You merit to be considered a common enemy! "It shall be lawful for Churchwardens of any parish," after five years, to level graves, demolish tombstones, and erase the memorials of many generations, and "to cause" the ravaged mansion of the dead "to be planted with shrubs or trees," or to be appropriated to any public use or benefit; and after "twenty years," such grounds may be excavated to any depth,

and the bones and dust of our parents, wives, and children, carted off by wagon-loads, and shot into the nearest brick-field! Sir, are you fond enough to believe that an outrage so gross, and so full of abomination, will be tolerated by Englishmen?

October 13, 1842.

LETTER III.

DESTRUCTIVE EFFECTS OF THE BILL ON DISSENTING CHAPELS.

SIR,—We have already adverted to your proposal to spoliage the people of England of their Family Vaults and Graves, and to convert the dust of their fathers into pleasure-grounds for the diversions of young ladies and gentlemen and the sportive freaks of lap-dogs and children. We now proceed to draw your attention to the effects of your Bill, should it become law, upon those Dissenting Chapels with which Burial Grounds are connected. Such Chapels may be distributed into three classes; first, those on which there is no debt; secondly, those on which there is a debt, but not a mortgage; and thirdly, those whose debt is in the shape of mortgage.

Of the first of these classes, the number is considerable; but it is not to be supposed, that, because there is no interest to pay for chapel debt, there is, therefore, no outlay connected with such chapels. Very many of them are oppressed with a heavy ground-rent; then there is, the permanent charge for rates, repairs, cleaning, and lighting, frequently amounting to a considerable sum. The Burial Fees, in many cases, generally suffice to meet those demands; they are sometimes less than the sum required, sometimes more. Now, this is no small matter. These fees relieve the ordinary revenue of the Chapels from a burden which would otherwise create a deficiency in other departments of their expenditure. Your Bill, if passed, would annihilate this source of income, and thus operate as a grievous hardship on many a community of great moral worth, but of no opulence. How could such an evil be remedied? The expenses in question must be provided for somehow, or the institution must come to nothing. You leave the parties to make up their own deficiency,

or to lose all. Will you favour the public with your reasons for so harsh and so inequitable a procedure ?

Of the second class of Chapels, namely, those on which there is a debt, but not a mortgage, the number is very great; the debt amounting, in most instances, to many hundreds, and, in a multitude of cases, to thousands of pounds. In the majority of these cases, the money has been obtained on the personal security of the trustees and leading men of the respective Chapels; responsibilities which they were induced to undertake in reliance on the revenues arising from their Burial-ground, which generally sufficed to meet the interest of the sums borrowed, and in some cases to aid in gradually liquidating the debt. This source of revenue was so sure, and, in point of amount, so little liable to fluctuation, that trustees did not hesitate to encounter the responsibility. By your Bill, persons so situated have everywhere been thrown into great consternation. They see that their revenue will be cut off in one hour, never more to return, while their burdens will be hopelessly continued.

What then is to be done ? The lenders must have their interest, and also their capital, when any of them happen to demand it. How are they to obtain either the one or the other ? The borrowers were in no respect beneficially interested, and, although generally men of character, they are not always, nor indeed frequently men of opulence ; but if they were, we submit that it would be unjust to throw upon them such burdens ; and if, in a spirit of incredible generosity, the present race should prove willing to bear them, where are successors to be found ? How is the half-yearly or annual interest of this vast amount of capital to be paid ? When monies are called in, how are they to be raised ? Who will become security after the burial-grounds are closed ? Who will advance the necessary sums without security ? See, then, Sir, the condition to which your Bill, if carried, would reduce all Chapels thus circumstanced ! The congregations must either take the burdens on themselves, or the sale of their Chapels and grounds must speedily ensue : if the former, in numerous instances, the weight would be too heavy to be borne ; if the latter, their certain ruin follows. In the majority of cases, these congregations have so large sums to raise for the support of their own pastors, for education, missions, and

charities, that to impose heavy additions to their existing burdens, were to act a part alike cruel and unjust in itself, and destructive of the property of Nonconformists.

Of the third of these classes ; namely, those Chapels which have raised money on mortgage, the number is far from small ; while the sums may be said to range between one and eight or ten thousand pounds per Chapel. These, of course, comprise chiefly Chapels of the largest size. In many such instances, the sums are too great for mere personal security to be either given or taken ; the property, therefore, becomes its own security. But in some cases, the sum required is too much for the convenience or prudence of one party to advance it, even under mortgage, and the result is the introduction of a second, or even of a third mortgagee. We know examples of such triple investment. In all such cases, the property must evidently be of great value. We will specify a strong example, the facts of which are before us. It is the case of a Chapel, which, with its spacious vaults, of the best construction, and a burial-ground most eligibly situated, cost upwards of 21,000*l*. On this estate, in round numbers, the sum of 10,000*l*. has been borrowed from three parties, upon three distinct deeds of mortgage ; the second subject to the first, the third to both. The security, at the date of the deeds, was deemed excellent ; and it really was so. Before the suburban Cemeteries were opened, the Mortuary Fees not only met the interest, but yielded a surplus, which, had it continued, would, at no very distant period, have liquidated the debt. Thus, while the Trustees bore their burden with all possible comfort, the congregation were rent-free, and the Mortgagees had no cause for the slightest anxiety respecting their capital. Had the property been sold, it would have brought, at the least, a larger sum than that for which it was mortgaged. What would be the condition of this handsome property, should your ill-considered Bill receive the sanction of Parliament ? Here, you will please to observe, are a new class of sufferers : not the leading men of a religious community, not such a community itself, but a body of men holding property by a legal tenure. Their deeds are their sole security. You close the vaults and the grounds ; and, although their deeds are drawn in the same form, and under the same sanction, as those which *Abednego* the money-lender

holds from Lord Lavish, you would treat them as so much waste-paper. An annual sum of many hundreds of pounds ceases to be received by the Trustees, whose obligations to pay, as you are well aware, depends wholly on their receipts. But there is an end to the latter, and therefore, an end also to the former. The interest of the respective sums ceases to be paid. What is now to be done? The hopes of the Mortgagees are cut off for ever. Time cannot improve their position. Nothing remains for them but to act on their security. Well; they foreclose and sell their property. What does it bring? Its value now is simply its worth as a chapel; the grounds and vaults go for nothing, and, as a Place of Worship merely, it might perhaps be considered dear at 200% per annum. We may consider it sold then for 4,000%: but very probably it would not bring 3,000%; for property such as this is not every man's bargain. It has few attractions for the mere capitalist, and none at all for the speculative builder. Who else is to bid for it? It is equally beyond the means and necessities of a small infant congregation of Dissenters: any large and established congregation is, of course, already provided for, and does not want it. The Church-Building Commissioners, if at all they required such a spot, would give for it merely what is worth as a foundation: for they would not condescend to use the existing edifice.

Now, Sir, tell us what you mean to do with these Mortgagees? You utterly destroy their property: and to each of them, for aught you know, it might be ruin. Is the thought comfortable to you? Should you delight in the reflection, that you had brought destruction upon the heads of three honest citizens? It will not avail you to flee to the Sanctuary of Justice, the Hall of Legislation, and there to declaim on "Sanatory Regulations," Public Health, and so forth. If we are not most egregiously misled, even Mr. Walker himself, with the aid of his friend and worthy coadjutor, Whittaker, would have some difficulty in assigning satisfactory reasons for shutting up the vaults and grounds of the chapel in question. These vaults—we speak after personal inspection—are of but recent erection, and are constructed on the best principles; they would hold thousands, though they do not yet contain hundreds. No burials are permitted there, but in leaden coffins. But what of the adjoining ground? Why, this,

at the present ratio of interment, it will require a whole generation to fill it! But what of "decency?" The best authorities do most confidently vouch for it, that no impropriety of any kind has occurred during the period in which the vaults, &c., have been opened. But is it not a nuisance to the neighbourhood? The contrary is maintained, and, we are assured, can be fully proved on the testimony of the nearest residents.

But, Sir, the matter does not end here. There are other and not unimportant parties whom it most deeply concerns. If the Chapel in question be sold, what is to become of the congregation, who raised, by voluntary contributions, 11,000*l.* out of the 21,000*l.*? They, too, are involved in the ruin of the Mortgagees. And what of the minister of the chapel? You destroy his freehold and living, as well as the religious home and privileges of his flock. If the Chapel be lost, what is to become of the congregation? If the congregation be broken up, what is to become of the minister? If the Mortgagees sell for only 4,000*l.*, they lose 6,000*l.* If the congregation buy for 4,000*l.*, they just lose 4,000*l.*, for they are buying back what was once their own. If the congregation suffer the chapel to go, and build afresh, the outlay is just so much loss; for they had already provided for their own accommodation. The inevitable result of your Bill is, in all its aspects, marked by calamity and cruelty, loss and robbery! Such are the fruits of your precious measure! The case we have described may be an extreme one; but such, though in different degrees, will be its effects on a multitude of Chapels belonging to different denominations.

October 17, 1842.

LETTER IV.

THE ARGUMENT FOR COMPENSATION TO DISSENTERS—THE BISHOP OF
LONDON'S STANDARD OF CLERICAL COMPENSATION.

SIR,—Having set before you some of the manifold and multi-form evils affecting Dissenting chapels with burial grounds, which would result from the passing of your Bill, we now beg leave

ask, are you still determined to proceed with your measure, or have you made up your mind to its abandonment? Do you seriously believe that you can obtain the sanction of either House of Parliament to a project so fraught with destruction to the rights of property? From your studies at Lincoln's Inn you might surely have ascertained enough of the *jura rerum* from Blackstone, to know that your Bill is wholly inconsistent with British law, as well as with moral justice; and it is the province of the Legislature to protect property, not to destroy it. Before you proceed with your Bill, it behoves you to ascertain the exact position of Dissenting vaults and burial grounds according to the Common Law of England. Does not the same law which permits Dissenters to purchase ground and erect chapels on it, permit them also to construct vaults under, and form cemeteries around them? In granting such permission to Dissenters, the Legislature exercised neither grace nor bounty; it merely placed them on a level with the Established Church. It was, moreover, necessary that the same law which authorised Dissenters to erect edifices for the living, should also allow them to provide places of sepulture for the dead, since Dissenting ministers were interdicted the performance of funeral duties in the parochial grounds. Thus, the right of interment is, to the Dissenter, both a matter of property and a matter of privilege, a legal source of revenue, and a special means of religious accommodation. The Legislature, we submit, has no more right to interdict the proper use of Dissenting burial grounds, than to interdict the proper use of Dissenting chapels. *Cæmeterium gaudet eodem privilegio quo ecclesia*, is an ancient maxim as applied to the Established Church; and we insist on the extension of the principle to the grounds of Dissenters. This is the foundation of our present argument.

Let us now look at the position of the clergy of the Church of England. The parson, we grant, according to both law and usage, has in himself, during his life, the freehold of the parsonage-house, of the Church, a portion of the produce of the churchyard, of the glebe, of the tithes, and of other dues. Is this the ground on which your Bill proposes to transfer the services of the clergy to the projected Cemeteries, or, in the event of their refusing, to give them compensation? If it be

so, we should like to know for what reason you deny compensation to Dissenters. Are not the principles of justice immutable? On Dissenters you inflict the wound, and, without the provision of either balm or bandage, you pass on, lavishing all your attention on others, whose injuries, and, consequently, whose claims are no greater. How is this? Do oblige us by a statement of your reasons. In the case of the Establishment, the church-yard enclosure belongs to the parish; the produce, in part, goes to the minister, and in part to the wardens and parish clerk. In the case of the Dissenters, the inclosure belongs to the congregation; the produce, in part or in whole, may go to the trustees, and be appropriated to the payment of interest or of debt, to the repairs of the edifice, or the maintenance of the minister. Thus far, for all practical purposes, the analogy is perfect. In both cases, the incumbents may die; but the corporate bodies, the parish and the congregation, live. Your Bill provides for both the parish and the priest; but there you leave the matter. How is this, Sir? Have you forgotten the Bishop's weighty words when he sat before you as a witness? Referring to his clergy, and to the compensation which they claimed, did he not say, "You cannot expect men, the principal part of whose subsistence, in some cases, depends upon the fees arising from a practice that has hitherto not been complained of, willingly to give up the whole source of that income without some compensation!" Sir, is justice temporary and mutable—a thing of times, places, and persons? If otherwise, why concede that to Churchmen which you refuse to Dissenters? But the claims you reject are much stronger than those you sustain. In the one case you protect an individual; in the other, you rob a multitude. You protect the parson's "fees," to which he has no legal, no moral claim; you spoil a Dissenting congregation of the fair and legal revenues resulting from property purchased with their own money.

Sir, is this just legislation? As we have once already reminded you, it is to no purpose you talk of a public nuisance. You must *prove* that nuisance, and prove it in every case. We beg also to remind you, that you must prove the nuisance to have been brought to the parties aggrieved, and show that they have not come to it; otherwise, they have no remedy either in

law or in equity. Now, it will be proved to the House of Commons, that a number of the most important Dissenting chapels, with their burial-grounds, and some of those which will be most affected by your Bill, at their original formation stood alone, far removed on every side from the habitations of men. Is it, then, for those who voluntarily sat down beside them, to frame complaints? Is not the blame wholly their own? Were their grievance real, how could such persons merit either pity or redress?

But, Sir, one of the most vexatious circumstances connected with your projected robbery, is the fact, that, with a single exception, most monstrously exaggerated, all the special facts on which your Bill is grounded, stand connected with the Established Church. If you take the burial-grounds of the Friends, Jews, Independents, Baptists, and Methodists, we fearlessly affirm, that you will find among them very few grounds that even approach repletion, or from which one substantial reason can be deduced for the closing of the same. In the name of these bodies of Dissenters, therefore, we protest against your wholesale proceedings, and your project of reckless plunder! We challenge investigation; the parties for whom we plead court it; they demand it! Will you refuse them? We give you timely warning that they will take no denial. They know their rights, and they are determined to assert them. You may rest assured that they now see through your project, and will not neglect to avail themselves of the means they possess of averting the evil which your Bill is calculated to inflict upon them. If your own Church has been committing abominations, by all means correct them, and use all proper severity against the wrong-doers; but beware of confounding the innocent with the guilty!

Let us now glance at the question of Clerical Compensation, as it stands related to the general public,—a point which we view with much and most unfeigned alarm. Your Bill provides that “the Rector, Vicar, or Incumbent, * * * shall receive as compensation for the loss to him of fees, in consequence of the formation of such Cemetery, on any burial that shall take place in the consecrated part thereof, *such amount of such fees as shall be fixed and determined by the Bishop of the diocese in which*

such Cemetery shall be situated." How pleasant a prospect this opens up to the inhabitants of London! Two millions of men will thus be placed at the mercy of episcopal authority, which, if not strenuously resisted, will succeed in putting in operation an efficient machinery for robbing and peeling them and their multiplying descendants in all coming time! Bishop Blomfield, when it suits his purposes, can, at will, assume the appearance of openness, candour, and manly dignity; but, even then, he is ever meditating the means of uprooting Nonconformity. It is no more safe to view his conduct than his character in parts. He must be judged as a whole. Cunning man!

"Instruction, manners, mysteries, and trades,
Degrees, observances, customs, and laws,
Decline to your confounding contraries."

His Lordship is incomparably the best living example of the grand rule of the great Casuist, which runs thus: "Upon holy days let the matter of your meditations be according to the mystery of the day, and to your ordinary devotions of every day, add the prayer which is fitted to the mystery." All the days of Charles James are holy, and every day has its mystery, every mystery its meditation, and every meditation its prayer. His favourite mystery, at present, is the theory of clerical compensation. He has already proved to his own satisfaction and to that of his clergy, that "compensation" is "sacrifice," and that he who receives three times more than he surrenders, is, after all, no gainer! We will illustrate these points, that we may apprise the people of England of the peril of that clause of your Bill, which empowers the Bishop to fix the amount of the parson's compensation. We shall sift this "mystery" of Charles James to the bottom; and we hope the burst of public indignation will blow it to atoms!

Happily for the public, Bishop Blomfield, after several experiments in framing tariffs for the tomb, after much consultation with his clergy, and still more with himself, has already fixed the general standard of compensation. The taxes of 5s. and 1s. 6d. upon each body interred at Kensal-green, and in the Cemeteries of the North, South, and East London Cemetery Company, although far above the average sum now received by

the metropolitan clergy, did not satisfy the Reverend Gentlemen. The Bishop, therefore, determined, that, if another Company should be formed, and should apply for an Act to establish a Cemetery, he would make them bleed at every vein; and, in 1837, he found a noble victim in the "West of London and Westminster Cemetery Company," whose Act contains the monstrous clause which we recited in our last Address to you. Referring to that Act, in his evidence before your Committee, he exultingly said: "In that case the Company are obliged, by law, to pay a fine of 10s. for every funeral, to the clergyman from whose parish it comes. That sum was considered, by the clergymen whom I consulted upon that occasion, as being a *fair compensation*." He forgot to tell you, however, that this time he provided for the parish clerk, (condescending, as Cowper says, "*for once to take his part,*") to whom also he secured one shilling on each corpse! His Lordship doubtless considers this Act, the fruit of matured experience and deep clerical counsel, as the model act for other cemeteries. And no wonder; its perfections are astonishing. That the main facts may not be forgotten, we will state them again. The distinction between vaults, brick graves, and open ground, is annihilated; the distinctions of age, too, are lost; the British Peer and the working man, the infant of days and the hoary grandsire, all are placed on a level. Down with every corpse must go shillings ten for the parson, and one also for the clerk!

A Clerical Tax of Eleven Shillings on Dead Bodies! Here, then, is the fixed standard of compensation. With this light in our hand, we will pursue the mitred Lord through some of the windings of his evidence. He told you he was "sure that the clergy, generally speaking, would be willing to make some *sacrifice* for the sake of effecting so great an improvement as is contemplated," having previously told you there was hardly any necessity for it. You took special care to insert this piece of pious and patriotic intelligence in your Report; no doubt, lest a fact so honourable, but so incredible, should be overlooked in the Evidence. But let us be just to the Bishop; this dexterous descendant of Loyola uses terms after the custom of his order. This "*sacrifice*," which the clergy are "*willing to make,*" turns out, after

all, to mean nothing less than "a fair compensation." Sir, why not have published *this* in your Report? We will explain the Prelate's "mystery;" and do you, Sir, mark his wily words! "(3029.) I believe, in all cases, they would be disposed to take a fair average compensation for those precarious fees." These enlightened and philanthropic men are willing to have that which is "precarious" rendered certain, and, for their fees, to take "a fair average compensation;" and it is decided by the Bishop and his Clergy, that "a fair compensation" amounts to just *ten shillings* to the parson and *one shilling* to the clerk! This is the "sacrifice" which, "in all cases," they are willing to make for the good of their country! Hear it, O people! On these terms the magnanimous clergy of the Church of England are ready to cede their authority in the empire of death! Yes, these Reverend owners of the souls and bodies of their fellow-creatures are willing, in the style of the ancient corporation of Smithfield, to surrender their "vested rights" in the corpses of the people of England for ten shillings "per head," and one shilling to the parish clerk! Sir, again we ask, why did you not publish *this* in your Report?

A Clerical Tax of Eleven Shillings on Dead Bodies! If ten shillings for the parson be the average compensation, does it not follow that ten shillings is now the average clerical fee? If not, the assumption is a falsehood. Is such the fact? Sir, you know it is not! Did not the Reverend Dr. Russell, Rector of Bishopsgate, once Bishop Blomfield's own parish, say to you, (2469) "My fee, on an average, in one case, is 3s.; and, in the other case, 2s.; and, for a child, it is somewhat less?" Nay, Sir, did he not say (2481), "I am quite sure, that, if the Cemeteries were to pay me the smallest sum, I should be a gainer, on the average, if I received for *all the bodies*?" Again, did he not say (2482), "In the London Cemetery it is 5s. for a brick grave, and 1s. 6d. for the others; and, putting the average together, I should be rather a gainer, if the Cemeteries were to take all the bodies?" Here the Rector has none of the Bishop's "mystery;" all is clear and straightforward. In the one case, the two classes of fees united make 5s.; in the other, 6s. 6d.; while, for the smaller sum, the parson has, in all weathers, to do the work, when, for the larger, he does nothing. This re-

minds us of the concluding stanza of Cowper's Parson's "Yearly Distress :"—

" 'Twould cost him, I dare say,
Less trouble taking twice the sum,
 Without the clowns that pay."

But is Dr. Russell a competent judge in such matters? A judge! Who is superior? He is a large proprietor in one of the Cemeteries, and also the Company's Chairman, and thoroughly conversant with the whole business. Did he not show his sense, as well as his integrity, when he told your Committee (2484), "If you give to the clergyman of the parish the fee he has *now*, for a burial, clearly it would make no difference to him whether the burial was in the one place or the other." Why, then, give them twice or thrice as much?

But it may be urged that the fees are low at Bishopsgate church. Very well. We will take parishes from two sides of the city, and the first on the precincts of the Eleven Shillings Model Cemetery; let it be Lambeth itself. Before us lies a "bill of dues paid" in January of the present year, and that for the "first ground," too; and what think you is the fee? Ten shillings for the parson and one shilling for the clerk? No:—

" Rector 3s. 0d.
 Clerk 1s. 8d."

Let us next take the important parish of Islington; a "bill of dues" for a burial in the chapel-ground of St. Mary lies before us:—

" Minister..... 2s. 6d.
 Clerk 1s. 4d."

There may be cases where the fees are much higher, there doubtless are; but unquestionably these great parishes, taken from two distinct and also highly respectable sections of the metropolis, may be viewed as the average. Had these burials been at the Bishop's Model Cemetery, instead of 3s. and 2s. 6d., the respective parsons, without moving a step or uttering a word, would have pocketed a half-sovereign! But according to the "mystery" of the Bishop of London, this would have been a "sacrifice," and that "sacrifice" merely "a fair compensation!"

A Clerical Tax of Eleven Shillings on Dead Bodies! Your Bill empowers the Bishop to determine the amount of compen-

sation to clergymen ; and he himself has declared " a fair compensation " to be as we have stated it,—ten shillings to the parson and one to the clerk. Sir, this is a matter of the utmost moment. If your Bill should pass, the entire mortality of the city will be burdened with this most iniquitous impost.

October 24, 1842.

LETTER V.

THE GRAND COLLUSION BETWEEN BISHOP BLOMFIELD AND THE CEMETERIES.

SIR,—While an enlightened public will denounce and detest your preposterous and iniquitous Bill, it will, nevertheless, have reason to thank you for the investigation to which it has led, of the crafty and covetous practice of Churchmen. They are not, however, the only party whose proceedings will receive illumination ; your own doings will not be forgotten, and the various Cemetery Companies will likewise come in for their proper share of notice ; while, it must be confessed, that, taking you altogether, you present a body to whose peculiar claims and virtues the Dean of St. Patrick alone could have done justice.

Sir W. Clay's acute examination of the Bishop tended not a little to illustrate some of the more latent attributes of his Lordship's singular character. Sir William, referring to the ten shilling tariff incorporated with the Act of the Westminster Model Cemetery, said : " That provision is limited to bodies buried within the consecrated portion of the Cemetery ? " The Prelate's answer is full of instruction : " I do not recollect whether that was so or not." He did " not recollect ! " What ! is there no recoil from the thought of charging a duty of ten shillings on every body interred even in the unconsecrated ground ? No, not the least ; Charles James has no sympathy with the pious exclamation of the father of his country's poetry—

" Oh ! double sacrilege on things divine,
To rob the relic, and deface the shrine ! "

A true Churchman is quite prepared to tax our mortal bod

although he has not blessed our earthen bed ! Till propelled by the judicious interrogatories of Sir William, the Bishop's conscience had never grappled with the subject. In the statement which led to Sir William's question, the Prelate spake as if for all bodies, wherever buried, ten shillings were paid. His words are: " A fee of ten shillings for every funeral to the clergyman from whose parish it comes." The idea of ten shillings appears to have so intoxicated the mind of the " spiritual" Lord, that he had not a thought to bestow upon the subject of consecration or unconsecration. Perhaps he cared, in reality, nothing about the place ; what he wanted was the money for the clergy. He regarded place simply as relating to money. Sir William, justly alarmed at the enormous exaction of the Act of the Model Cemetery, and afraid the Bishop might force it into a precedent, reminded his Lordship that an Act had passed, since that Act, for the Cemetery within the Tower Hamlets, in which there were two classes of fees, and of smaller amount. To this timely but most unwelcome intimation, the Prelate coolly answered: " Yes ; I think there are two classes of fees in the Tower Hamlets." The Baronet asked whether the one class of fees was not 7s. 6d., and the other 2s. 6d. ; he replied, " Yes ;" and then followed this explanation: " It was settled by me, after a conference with the clergy ; that being a part of London from which funerals would be, generally speaking, of a different class from those sent to Kensal-green, and to the London and Westminster Cemetery." Hear the voice of pity for the half-pauper population of the Tower Hamlets ! The aggregate fees he has imposed on the Tower Hamlets are ten shillings ; the aggregate fees on Kensal-green are only 6s. 6d. This is the measure of the Prelate's humanity for a teeming and deeply impoverished population ! Sir William (3003) pressed the Bishop to say whether he " wished to suggest that ten shillings was the proper sum, in every case, for clerical compensation." Confounded by the question for a moment, his reply was, " No, I did not ;" and then, having recovered his self-possession, he immediately adds: " It was considered by the CLERGY, on the whole, *to be a reasonable compensation.*" They thought it " the proper sum ;" did their diocesan think it too much ?

This conducts us to the master-stroke of the Prelate's policy,

In reply to a very inconvenient question put by Sir William, the Bishop, less moved by shame than by prudence, said: "I do not wish fees to be paid to clergymen upon the funerals of Dissenters, whose friends choose to bury them in unconsecrated ground; but what I wish to avoid is, holding out a premium to the middle and poorer classes to be buried, being members of the Church of England, in unconsecrated ground, where they would not pay the fees which are usually payable to the clergyman; and, therefore, I should wish, if it were possible, that some fees should be payable to the authorities who regulate the Cemeteries, for *all* funerals; but fees payable to the clergy should be only for those buried in consecrated ground." The true character of this project will immediately appear. You and your Committee, however, became either the dupes or the partners of the sagacious Prelate. Among the Resolutions with which your Report concludes, one (the thirteenth) is, "That no fees from any such burials in unconsecrated ground be payable to any ministers of the Church of England." Sir, to those who judge by appearances, this mutual view of the Bishop and of your Committee will perhaps seem just and almost generous. But these words, as used by him and them respectively, were intended to bear a very different signification. As employed by the Bishop, they set forth, not his "wish," but his prudence; he desired more, but he feared he would not be able to obtain it. Your Committee, on the contrary, or a portion of them at least, we believe, were sincere in their recommendation. Were you, Sir? Do you claim to be classed with them? How comes it, then, that this just and most important recommendation, with every other of the same character contained in your Report, was entirely overlooked in framing your Bill? At whose instance were these omissions? You have taken singular care of every recommendation which related to the clergy, and to these added much, of your own free bounty. You empower them to tax the public for the purchase and preparation of Cemeteries; you convert the Cemeteries so purchased and prepared, into freeholds of the clergy; you authorise them (Clause 22) to "fix and settle a table of fees to be paid on interments" and "for the exclusive right of burial," as also for "erecting and placing any monument or grave-stone in the Cemetery;" 34

amply provide (Clause 33) for the "distress and sale of the goods and chattels" of the Dissenters, if they refuse compliance with clerical exactions; and, should either their principles or their poverty stand in the way of their prompt obedience, you also provide for their committal "to the common gaol or House of Correction." All this we find copiously set forth in your Bill; but where shall we look for your clause of exemption from fees on Dissenters' burials to the clergy? You hand over the entire population of the metropolis and of the other cities and great towns of England to the tender mercies of the clergy, to do as they please both with the dead and with the living. In every thing that appertains to the whole system, they are to be absolute. You lay them under no species of control whatever. The parish vestries are as much overlooked as the Dissenters.

But, Sir, to return; what of this recommendation of your Committee for the exemption of Dissenters? For what cause was it excluded from your Bill? Why did you go in the face of your Committee? Why did you deviate from the course indicated by the Bishop? Was it honest towards the House of Commons, who gave you leave to bring in a Bill, to exclude from that Bill a portion of the main principles on the ground of which that leave was both sought and obtained? Sir, was this the conduct of an honourable man? Was it not a twofold deception, first, of your own Committee, and, secondly, of the legislature of the country? Is it not both an insult and a wrong to the Dissenters of England? Is it not a flagrant outrage at once against the principles of political justice and of religious freedom? Sir, is such the legislation befitting the nineteenth century? In the name of, not merely the Dissenters of England, but of the general public, we demand your reasons! Are you prepared to give them? We call upon you to stand forth in the face of your "Clan" and of your country, in your place in Parliament, and to defend these your proceedings!

Sir, leaving you a short respite, we will now turn to your mitred master and his associates, the Cemetery Companies, and show how unworthily and how unjustly they have conspired with him to deceive and oppress both Churchmen and Dissenters. In comparison with their conduct, yours appears to advantage. By your Bill, the public will be plundered openly and at noon-

day; by the Cemetery Acts, the robbery is effected at twilight and by stratagem. If there were any thing to choose between the two methods of destruction, we should consider yours preferable. You have displayed so little of your country's proverbial prudence, that you are quite outdone by the Bishop of London. The Prelate's problem is, how shall a heavy exaction be made to assume the aspect of justice? In plain practical terms, how may the dust of departed Churchmen and Nonconformists be most heavily, and, at the same time, most safely taxed? How best may Episcopalians be taxed without complaint, and Dissenters without consciousness? This is the Bishop's "mystery." In anticipation of an entire change in the economy of city sepulture, the sagacity of Charles James foresaw, that, if the burial fees of the unconsecrated and of the consecrated grounds were alike, and an enormous exaction added to the latter in the shape of a clerical fee, besides engendering discontent among the wealthy, it would drive multitudes among the middle and lower classes to the unconsecrated ground. Was he wrong in his conjecture? We should like to see the true Churchmanship of the country tested on the principle of pounds, shillings, and pence. The Bishop therefore wished, "if it were possible, that some fees should be payable to the authorities who regulate the Cemetery, for *all* funerals!" Oh! the depth of Ecclesiastics! According to Addison, "there are greater depths and obscurities in an elaborate and well-written piece of nonsense, than in the most abstruse tract of school divinity;" but there are greater depths in some of the heads of the Church than in all the nonsense and all the divinity now extant, in our own or any other language. "I should wish," says his Lordship, "if it were possible." Possible! He could have told you that it was easily practicable, and actually in full operation, in all the Act-of-Parliament Cemeteries around London.

We will now disclose a state of things of which the public generally were but little aware, and which will not fail to excite feelings of indignation and disgust in the breasts of all upright men. We will select our illustrations from the Bishop's Model Cemetery, at Westminster. Let us take a common-sense view of the whole matter. A piece of ground is purchased, wall

round, and then the whole is prepared for sepulture. The one-half of the enclosure, without another shilling of outlay, is ready for immediate interments; the other half becomes the subject both of an immediate outlay and of a permanent burden. There is, first, the enormous fee—to a small shopkeeper a little fortune—of the Bishop for consecration; secondly, a permanent parson-tax of ten shillings for every body interred; thirdly, one shilling to the parish clerk; and, fourthly, the salary, of some four or five hundred a year, for the chaplain, who must be a regular clergyman, approved by the Bishop. Such are the comparative costs of the unconsecrated and of the consecrated grounds. How ought these circumstances to bear upon the fees respectively? In the one case, there is no expense for consecration, for clergy, for clerk, or for chaplain, for no chaplain is provided for the unconsecrated portions; the parties are left to procure their own, or to go without. What proportion ought the fees of this part of the ground to bear to that which is consecrated, and which has been prepared and is upheld at an expenditure of nearly thrice the amount? In this, as in every thing commercial, ought not the outlay to regulate the remuneration? Would not one-third of the sum demanded as fees for the consecrated ground, suffice for the unconsecrated? But take it even at one-half, if you please, and what are the facts? They are these: there is no *difference as to charge in the two grounds*. The poor Dissenter pays just as much for his unblest bed as the Churchman for his consecrated couch. Here there is either much favour to the one party, or much injustice to the other. Let us take the case of a "common grave," charged at 1*l.* 3*s.*, as an illustration. When the Dissenter pays this, there is no deduction; to the Company, it is so much clear money for the mere ground. When the Churchman pays it, there are heavy deductions to be made; 10*s.* for the parson, 1*s.* for the clerk; say, at least, 2*s.* 6*d.* for the chaplain; and a penny, a Peter's penny (is that too little? well, take the benefit of it,) for the consecration. Here, then, is an outlay of 13*s.* 7*d.*, so that 11*s.* 3*d.* is all the clear money that remains to the Company for the ground. How is this? Is the Churchman charged too little, or is the Dissenter charged too much? Commercial justice, we think, requires either that the former should pay

17. 18s. 7d.; or that the latter should pay only 11s. 5d. The Company are enormous losers in the one case, or enormous gainers in the other. How is it? Is it that the clergy, on the one hand, plunder the Episcopalians, and that, to cloak the deed, the Company, on the other, plunder the Dissenters? Well, whichever it be, this is the very sort of thing that Bishop Blomfield wishes to be done in the projected Cemeteries, when he says, "I wish to avoid holding out a *premium* to the middle and poorer classes to be buried, being members of the Church of England, in unconsecrated ground, where they would not pay the fees which are usually payable to the clergyman." Oh! cruel purpose! Is it come to this? Must Dissenters of every rank be legally robbed, lest the corpses of even the "*poorer classes*" of Churchmen should descend into the dust without paying one more tax! Yes, even the dead bodies of the flocks of these "authorised" gentle shepherds, cannot escape their greedy grasp when descending into the silent tomb, to mingle with their mother earth! In such men has poverty, even the deepest, and distress the most unmitigated, at length lost the power of exciting pity? Even the cold clay, for which the colder hand of parochial charity provides a winding-sheet, a shell, and a hole in the ground, must yield a revenue to these Reverend proprietors of the bodies of their species! Yes, Sir, Dr. Blomfield is consistent in all his pastoral proceedings. In the very last Cemetery Act passed, namely, that of the "City of London and Tower Hamlets Company," he inserted a clause which distinguishes it from all the other Acts we have yet seen. That clause (176) empowers the clergy to levy a contribution of *one shilling* "for every corpse interred at the expense of any union established for the relief of the poor." Here clerical cupidity has surely reached its climax! Can anything be conceived more shameless, heartless, revolting? But the worst does not, at first sight, appear. We have already recited the Bishop's words relative to it, assigning the *poverty* of the region as a reason why he had relaxed his demands a little, taking 7s. 6d. and 2s. 6d. respectively, instead of one uniform charge of 10s., as at the Model Cemetery. To make up the loss, these thoughtful men (for the Bishop tells us there was a conferrer of the clergy about it) set their wits to work to turn even 1

poverty to account! The desolate widow of fourscore, the homeless, friendless, forlorn wretch, who has survived every thing but his misery, and the pauper infant born but to die, and happy in its lot,—all must be taxed on their way to the only place where the weary are at rest from clerical oppression, to pamper the pride and nourish the luxury of an Established Priesthood!

But, Sir, in this Act there is another feature which fearfully distinguishes it from all its predecessors. While, like the other Acts, it starts with the plan of consecrated and unconsecrated ground, it contains the extraordinary provision (clause 180), "That it shall be lawful for the Bishop of London, for the time being, if the same shall be deemed expedient by the Directors for the time being, to consecrate the *whole* of the Cemetery." This is a most ominous clause! The spirit and the principle of it extend far beyond these cities of the dead. Let those Dissenters who have purchased graves and vaults in the unconsecrated ground look to themselves. Let them mark the consequences of this clause, when it comes to be acted upon, to themselves and to their descendants.

But to return to the "mystery." The Act of Parliament Cemeteries have all lent themselves most basely to further the Bishop's ends. They not only charge Dissenters more than is just, to conceal the fact of the enormous clerical taxes to which he has subjected them, *but are positively guilty of deceiving the public*. In all the scales of fees which lie before us, with a single exception, the Companies are guilty of this charge. That of Kensal-green, for instance, contains this notice: "*No fees whatever are payable by the parties, to any parish FROM OR THROUGH which bodies may be removed for interment in this Cemetery.*" The same declaration, *verbatim*, occurs in the scale of the Norwood Cemetery. Nay, incredible as it may seem, even the West of London and Westminster Company, the Model Company, that on which the parson-and-clerk tax of eleven shillings per corpse has been imposed—even *they* have the impudence to employ the very same terms *verbatim et literatim*. Contemptible fiction! "No fees whatever are payable by the *parties* to any parish." What then? In all cases, large fees, and in some cases enormous fees, are payable and paid to every parish by the

Companies? And who reimburses them? "The parties," to be sure! Was there ever a more discreditable collusion among bodies of persons claiming to be gentlemen, men of truth and honour? Instead of resenting a vile vassalage to the Bishop, bidding him bold defiance, and appealing to the nation, they have meanly bowed to his yoke, and become his associates as well as instruments in oppressing the British public. This prudence and caution are, no doubt, indispensable to the success of the measure. Were the clerical tax to be honestly set down as a separate item in the bill of dues at the Act-of-Parliament Cemeteries, we should soon want an Abney Park at every point of the compass, where the dead might descend into the grave at least without taxation! Sir, the Liberal Members of your Honourable House have taken too much for granted. They have silently allowed you to go thus far without interruption; but they will ere long explode your machinations in a voice of thunder!

Sir, before we conclude we must record a significant circumstance. We have proved that the presumption and rapacity of the clergy have gone on increasing from year to year, and that each new Cemetery Act has been, in some feature, an advance on all its predecessors. There is yet, however, another feature in the Tower Hamlets Act, which merits especial notice as an illustration of their growing confidence and rising pride. In the Acts for Kensal-green, Highgate, Nun Head, Norwood, and Westminster, while the several Companies are compelled, at all times, to show their books, the incumbents are uniformly bound to pay "one shilling for every such inspection." But the Act for the Tower Hamlets, the last Act passed, provides that "such books shall be, at all seasonable times, open to the inspection of the incumbents of the several parishes or ecclesiastical districts, or any person employed by them, *without fee or reward.*" How exactly do the modern apostolicals correspond to the ancient Pharisees! "They devour *widows'* houses, and, *for a pretence*, make *long prayers*. They bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but *they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.*" They pour taxes like a shower upon the Cemeteries; and a

the family of the dead must submit to the hard necessity. They alone rest in the midst of labour; they alone are free where all are fettered. Will *they* pay?—NO, NOT A SHILLING!

October 27, 1842.

LETTER VI.

THE PROPRIETY OF SUPPORTING THE CLERGY BY TAXES UPON DEAD BODIES, CONSIDERED.

SIR,—It is doubly cruel in you, a Scotchman, and by birth, we may presume, a Presbyterian Dissenter from the Episcopal Church, to put yourself forward, not only to wrong and oppress us, the Dissenters of England, but also to deepen the already deep degradation of her Established Clergy. If you love them, you act unwisely. Can their worst enemy wish to see them further humbled? Their position, for many ages, in relation to the sepulture of the whole country, but especially in regard to that of the great towns and cities, and, above all, of the Metropolis, has been most unseemly in itself, and most pernicious in its effects on religion. It is clear, that, when you began your inquiry, you knew nothing about the subject; else you would have conducted yourself very differently, when your foolish witness, Whittaker, told you, that the “Dissenting ministers make more by the dead than by the living.” The point and antithesis of the allegation exceedingly captivated you. You were deeply vexed, when, under cross-examination, the fellow was obliged to retract his words, and the thing was spoiled. Nevertheless, you thought it decent, even after the retraction, to repeat the falsehood to your witness Walker, as a *fact*, and to inquire if he could explain the puzzle! Will you have the goodness to tell us the ground of your surprise and anxiety on these occasions? Were you shocked at the alleged fact, as disclosing a revolting means of subsistence for men sustaining the character of Christian ministers? Or, were you offended and astonished to find, that the Dissenting ministers had the temerity to claim and seize a share of the spoils of Death, as well as the “lawful” lords of

the land of forgetfulness, the Established Clergy? It appears to us, that the former was your feeling. Your pure Presbyterian taste revolted from the disgusting idea, that Christian Pastors should be mainly supported by a poll-tax upon the dead! It would seem as if, for the moment, you deemed that such an enormity, even had it stood alone, was sufficient warrant for the introduction of a Bill for its suppression. You had not advanced much further, however, when you discovered, that the parochial clergy were themselves in the alleged predicament. Your professed desire from the first, indeed, to respect their "rights," shows that you knew that they had some interest—a genteel sort of claim, of course,—a pretty picking—in the matter; but you never dreamed that, in the Metropolis, death was, in numerous cases, the source of nearly *all their* living. What were your thoughts, when Parson followed Parson, each telling you that he was mainly dependent for the supply of the wants of every passing day, upon the sickness, sorrow, and death of his Parishioners? What were your feelings when the Mitred Lord himself, in the capacity of a Witness, as we have already stated in a former Letter, looked you calmly in the face and said: "*You cannot expect men, the principal part of whose subsistence, in some cases, depends upon the fees arising from a practice that has hitherto not been complained of, willingly to give up the whole source of that income without some compensation?*"

How did you relish this intimation? Did it teach you the imprudence of your course relative to the Dissenters? Sir, we beg now to assure you, that the shame or the glory of such a state of things belongs exclusively to your clients, the clergy. The words of the Bishop, just cited, could not be spoken with truth of a *single pastor* of any class of Protestant Dissenters. No! *They* live by the living, not by the dead. True Protestant Dissenters rejoice to walk by the Scripture rule, which enjoins that "He who is taught in the word, shall communicate to him that teacheth in all good things."

His Lordship also showed you, that this state of things, whatever be its character, was not limited to pauper parishes, but largely obtained even in districts chiefly inhabited by the aristocracy. He proved to you, that, in 1838, the burial-fees in St. George's, Hanover-square, amounted to the large sum of

597*l.* 17*s.*; in St. Giles's-in-the-Fields, to 764*l.* 16*s.* 6*d.*; in St. George's, Bloomsbury, to 273*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.*; in St. Andrew's, Holborn, to 306*l.* 0*s.* 1*d.*; in Paddington, to 494*l.* 14*s.*; and then summed up all in the general proposition, "that a *large part of the Clergymen's income depends upon the result, in some shape or other, of the Burials.*" This phrase, "in some shape or other," is significant, and receives its interpretation from other parts of the Bishop's evidence. In addition to the "regular fees," he told you, there were "the complimentary fees," and likewise "what are called 'the fittings,' which in some parishes amount to a considerable sum annually." This is not all: his Lordship further told you, that, by the shutting up of the Metropolitan Burial-grounds, "the clergy would lose the fees upon monuments, and grave-stones, and tablets."

Sir, have ye considered this system, and pondered the facts by which it is upheld and characterised? Is it congruous with the feelings of an enlightened age, with the spirit of the institutions of a free country, and with the principles of the Gospel of Christ? Will it abide the scrutiny of thinking men? Would the inquiry end in praise or in execration,—in the maintenance of the system, or in its destruction? Your adopted or adopting Mother claims to be *the Church*, the Apostolic Church: and her surpliced sons call themselves the successors of the Apostles! Surely, Sir, in such claims, burlesque has attained its climax! But we forget ourselves. It had almost escaped us, that Paul has actually left a description of his "Successors," which but too well harmonizes with much that we hear and see. You will no doubt remember his awful words: "I know this, that, after my departure, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." In recent controversies, men have too much confounded Apostolic *semblance* with Apostolic *succession*. Let the error be corrected. We concede the claim to those who clamour for it. The honour or the infamy is their own. We envy them neither their success nor their Succession. Was it thus that the Apostles and their co-adjutors were supported? Did they, throughout heathen lands, tax the youthful pair, when their plighted troth was sealed by matrimonial union? Did they tax the trembling mother on each first appearance after childbirth in the sanctuary of religion? Did they tax the dust of their

deceased disciples by a Tariff consisting of many steps, according as burials were in open ground, in vaults, in catacombs, in family graves,—a Tariff still augmented by dues for “desk-service,” for “early-hours,” for “leave to erect monuments, grave-stones, and tablets?”

Sir, we will not insult you, by asking you if such a system is Apostolic. No! we only ask, Is it rational? Is it decent? Is it tolerable? Who can calmly reflect upon it, without a sense of horror stealing upon the soul? How degrading, how deplorable is the condition of such men! Their parent provider is the destroyer of their species and of themselves! Their sumptuous table is daily spread by the horrid hand of Death! They do not, like the Poet of Impiety, drink out of a skull; but their goblet is filled with the tears of the widow and the orphan! Yes, they

“Squeeze a living out of tears!”

The wreck of other families is the building-up of theirs! The widow's weeds are brocade to the parson's lady! The parish hearse is “locomotive” to the Rector's coach!

Sir, let us look again, and look more deeply into the system. Is it compatible with the spirit of the office ministerial? That spirit is emphatically one of delicacy, disinterestedness, and generosity. It is utterly abhorrent from that of the cormorant, the harpy, and the vampire! The apostles appeal to the Searcher of hearts, that their covering was not a “cloak of covetousness,” and to the churches themselves, that they “were gentle among” them, “even as a nurse cherisheth her children.” Paul knew nothing of “fees” and “fittings,” and taxes as endless as they are remorseless. Hear him: “I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.” Thus it was with every pastor of *his* times. In no case did their interests conflict with those of their followers. How different was the condition of an Ephesian Elder from that of a London “authorised” Clergyman! The latter, it may be,

“From noise and riot most devoutly keeps,
Sighs with the sick, and with the mourner weeps.”

But still, for his interests, the more sickness and the more mourning, the better. Sickness is the bud of the tree whose fruit is death; but to the parson it is the tree of life. Mourn-

ing is his mint. The interest of the parson runs wholly counter to the interest of his parishioner. A plague of the ancient type, if he escaped it, would make his fortune. To his Reverence, pestilence is opulence! His chief and perennial benefactors and supporters are inflammation, apoplexy, dropsy, asthma, cholera, gout, palsy, croup, convulsion, and consumption. Health to the public is penury to him! Like Samson, he gets his honey out of carcases! With what a zest does he peruse the Bills of Mortality! To-day, behold him at the bedside of his dying parishioner, exhorting him, after the Rubric, to "suffer patiently adversities, troubles, and sicknesses:" at the same time "admonishing him to make his will and to declare his debts;" and then praying for him thus: "When thou art pleased to take him hence, take him to thy favour." Thus much for acts of compassion to the soul of his "good brother." Now for his body. A few days afterwards behold his Reverence, the same man again, or his agent, at the mouth of the sepulchre, demanding a heavy tax—it may hap just twenty shillings sterling—on the dust of his "good brother," as the price of its passage to the bosom of its mother earth!

Sir,—to avoid being debased in mind and heart by such a system, must not a minister be either less than a man, or more? Can you teach the clergy that they have a vested right in the dead bodies of their flocks, without blunting their moral feelings? Must not these circumstances of their position exert an influence upon them, not to be resisted by intelligence, by education, or by piety? Do not such circumstances fully account for the clerical enormities we perpetually hear of in all parts of the country,—enormities perpetrated without fear, or shame, or remorse? Take for example one of the least odious of these enormities—the triple tax. What would the Highland heroes of your "Clan," or the high-minded Lowlanders of your native country think, or say, or do, on being exposed to the exaction of triple taxes, by two parochial Clergymen, for the corpse of a son or daughter, a father or mother, dying in one parish, and being buried in another,—the incumbent, clerk, and sexton of the former parish demanding and receiving *full* fees, because the body was taken out of it, and the incumbent, clerk, and sexton of the latter parish demanding and receiving *double* fees,

because a stranger was brought into it? Only think of the effect of so barbarous an outrage in Scotland! Would not the first exaction be the last? Sir,—

“Thou art a Roman; be not barbarous!”

Take another fact of recent occurrence. At a late meeting of the Geographical Society it was stated, that “among the diseases of the Indians of South America, the small-pox was the most prevalent and destructive, and that out of a population of 240,000 souls, no less than 30,000 fell victims in the short space of four months. This prevalence is attributed to the circumstance that the clergy will not encourage vaccination, because great part of their revenue is derivable from burial fees.”*

Do reflect upon these things, and be not carried away by an unthinking sentimentality. Be not bewitched by the charms of clerical courtesy, nor blinded by the caresses of a Mitred Lord. Is not death in itself a penalty at all times sufficiently afflictive to survivors, without the aggravation of enormous as well as unjust fiscal additions; and these, too, imposed by the hands of men whose province emphatically it ought to be, to heal the wounded heart, and to wipe the mourner's tears? Sir! —If the domain of cruelty and extortion is to be extended in England, and their reign prolonged, let not the deed be perpetrated by a Scotchman! Let the Bishop look for

“other instruments

To see, and hear, devise, instruct, walk, feel,
And mutually participate”

with him in his schemes of aggression and of aggrandisement!

But, Sir, there appears to be nothing irksome to the clergy in this state of things. It really seems to be their native element. They rather deprecate than desire reform. Their conduct in regard to the new Cemeteries, looks

“As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on.”

It is not easy to conceive of any thing more degrading and discreditable than the position in which the clergy have deliberately placed themselves relative to the Kensal-green, Westminster, Highgate, Tower Hamlets, Nun Head, and Norwood

* See Westminster Review, No. lxxii. p. 213.

Cemeteries. The Acts by which these places are established, provide that the Clerical Tax shall be paid half-yearly; and "*for the purpose of ascertaining the amount of Fees payable to the Incumbents of the several parishes,*" the Companies are compelled to "cause books to be kept, and entries to be made therein, of the names of all persons interred within the consecrated part, and the names of the parishes or ecclesiastical districts from which such persons respectively shall have been removed, and the mode of their interment within the said Cemetery, (distinguishing whether in a vault, catacomb, or brick grave, or in the open ground,) together with the date of such interment; and such books shall be at all seasonable times open to the inspection of the incumbents for the time being of the said several parishes, or ecclesiastical districts." Here, again, it is proper to remind you of the infamous conduct of the Cemetery Companies, who with these words and much more to the same effect, in their respective Acts, staring them in the face, have the effrontery to publish from day to day, to all the world, that "*no fees whatever are payable by the parties to any parish FROM or THROUGH which bodies may be removed for interment in*" their respective Cemeteries! No truly, not by the "*parties,*" for then the secret would get out; but by the Companies, who disingenuously colude together to plunder the public that they may pamper the parson!

Now, Sir, to you we appeal, and call upon you to say, whether this system belongs to the class of things which Paul designates "lovely" and "of good report?" Is it not a truly primitive and Apostolic sight for the clerks and agents of the respective offices of these Cemeteries, to see the clergy of all the parishes in and round London for many miles, twice a year trooping to the said offices—to hear them calling for the said books,—to view them poring over such books pen in hand, calculating the profits of calamity and death, making out the account and demanding payment? Is not the sight full of moral beauty? How truly Apostolic! But irony gives place to indignation. How loathsome an avocation to persons possessing any refinement of taste or delicacy of feeling! Ought the ministers of religion to be exposed to the blighting influence of arrangements so revolting to a generous mind? Sir,—Why do you propose, by

your Bill, to extend and perpetuate the abomination? The land of your forefathers is disgraced and polluted by no such exactions. Could any power on earth induce the people of Scotland to submit to imposts so oppressive and so iniquitous? If the people were won over, their Ministers never could; they would be the first to lift up the voice of indignant abhorrence against it!

Sir,—In your zeal for the dead, why do you forget the living? Had you combined both, we should have thought somewhat differently of your plan. Your Bill had then been so far consistent. Why does it not enact, that, from and after a given period, the clergy should cease, in companionship with the worm, to feed upon corruption? Why not let the living support them, and let the dead descend untaxed into the tomb? Surely we may be allowed at least to die untaxed! If you will close their grave-yards, why not avail yourself of the circumstance to provide for them by means at once decent and honourable? Leave all such abominations to Popery. Let the foul spot be removed from the Protestant banner! The system is fraught with a double wrong; it is a curse to religion and a curse to its ministers! It ought to be straightway abolished, and they who prefer and profit by the labours of the clergy should be allowed to enjoy the privilege of remunerating them. But if justice must still be outraged by the compulsory taxation of one man for the support of the religion of another, we implore that we may be taxed alive, not dead,—that the pain and degradation of payment may rest with ourselves and not devolve upon our survivors. If it must be, tax our going out and our coming in; tax us from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot; tax meat, drink, air and light; tax sleep and vigilance, smiles and tears; tax all for the support of the church, and take all in default of payment; but pray touch not our shroud; pass by our cold clay! Do leave us a free passage to the grave, that we may quietly descend where we shall be taxed no more!

November 7, 1842.

LETTER VII.

THE HISTORY, CHARACTER. AND EVILS OF CONSECRATION IN RELATION TO THE PAROCHIAL BURYING-GROUNDS.

SIR,—Your Bill proposes that the projected Cemeteries shall consist of two parts, the one consecrated, and the other unconsecrated; an arrangement which will be deprecated by every pious and patriotic man in England, whether Churchman or Dissenter, who really understands the subject of consecration. Surely you, Sir, are not acquainted with it. Have you made it a matter of inquiry? All who have, pronounce it a contemptible imposture on the credulity of mankind, a baneful weed, planted by the hand of Antichrist in God's vineyard, and which ought, long ere now, to have been torn up by the roots in every portion of Protestant Christendom. Nothing shields it from universal scorn and ridicule but its antiquity, and its incorporation with such solemn realities. As you propose to extend and perpetuate the superstition, we will examine its history, character, and effects: and, by way of prelude, we invite your attention to the opinions of a staunch churchman, the late Rev. John Wesley. We remember nothing which more strikingly illustrates the mental independence and moral magnanimity of that truly great man, than his strictures on consecration.

"I do not know," says he, "any law that either enjoins or even permits it; and certainly, as it is not enjoined by the law of the land, so it is not enjoined by the law of God. Where do we find one word in the New Testament enjoining any such thing? Neither do I remember any precedent of it, in the purest ages of the church. It seems to have entered, and gradually spread itself, with the other innovations and superstitions of the Church of Rome. Do you think it, then, a superstitious practice? Perhaps it is not, if it be practised as a thing indifferent; but, if it is done as a necessary thing, then it is *flatly superstitious*. For this reason, I never wished that any Bishop should consecrate any chapel or burial-ground of mine. Indeed, *I should not dare to suffer it*; as I am clearly persuaded the

thing is wrong in itself, being not authorised either by any law of God, or by any law of the land. In consequence of which, I conceive that either *the clerk or the sexton may as well consecrate the church or the churchyard as the Bishop*. With regard to the latter, the churchyard, I know not who could answer that plain question. You say, this is consecrated ground—so many feet broad, and so many long; but pray how *deep* is the consecrated ground? Deep! what does that signify? Oh! a great deal; for, if my grave be dug too deep, I may happen to get out of the consecrated ground; and who can tell what unhappy consequences may follow from this? I take the whole of this practice to be a *mere relic of Romish superstition*; and I wonder that a sensible Protestant should think it right to countenance it; much more that any reasonable man should plead for the necessity of it! Surely it is high time, now, that we should be guided, not by custom, but by Scripture and reason.”*

Sir, these remarkable words will have no ordinary weight with those who duly estimate the character of the writer, while careful inquiry and profound reflection will infallibly conduct all men of sense and candour to the same conclusion.

It is not pretended that consecration is a thing derived from the Apostles. You will, doubtless, remember the affirmation of our highest ecclesiastical law authority, “that the first who decreed that churches should be consecrated was Eugenius, a Greek, and priest of Rome, who was the first that styled himself Pope.”† But how came this consecration of churches to be enforced in this realm? The same great authority tells us, “it was by a constitution of Otho.” But since churchyards are the main subject, what of them? The custom of burying in and around places of worship was also a Romish practice, originating in priestly cupidity, and brought into England about the year 750, by Cuthbert, Archbishop of Canterbury. Originally there was no connexion between edifices for Christian worship and places of sepulture; and the practice of burying in remoter spots of ground continued to the age of Gregory the Great, when the priests began, for fees, to offer sacrifice for departed souls; and, in order to their convenience, the bodies of their people were buried near at hand. The British clergy, taking

* Works, Vol. X., p. 511.

† Burn, Vol. I., p. 323.

up the matter with great zeal, did not only not wait for an Act of Parliament to authorise them, but went directly in the face of the statute *De Religiosis*, (7 Ed. I., st. 2)—conduct which was thus expressly condemned by the 15th R. II. c. 5: “Now of late, by subtile imagination, and by art and engine, parsons, vicars, and other spiritual persons, have entered into divers lands and tenements, which be adjoining to their churches, and of the same, by sufferance and assent of the tenants, have made churchyards, and, by *bulls of the Bishop of Rome have dedicated and hallowed the same*, and in them do make continually parochial burying, without license of the King or the chief Lords.”* Is not this an absolute demonstration of the fact, that churchyards were, in the first instance, “dedicated and hallowed” by the “bulls of the Bishop of Rome;” that is, by Antichrist? The Reformation, however, put an end to the power of the Pope, and the Protestant Bishops had to take the matter into their own hands.

Thus much for the origin of this Popish rite. Let us next inquire into the present position of the practice in England. Mr. Wesley asserts, “it is not enjoined by the law of the land.” This witness is true. Not only has the law not provided for its observance, but it has left it a mere phantasm, without even the verbal body of a settled form. The Convocation of the Clergy, which was held in 1661, drew up such a form; but it did not obtain the sanction of Parliament, neither was it published.† Again, in 1712, a fresh form was adopted by the Convocation, “which form again, as it did not receive the Royal assent, was not enjoined to be observed.”‡ The result, therefore, is, that, “in the Church of England every Bishop is left to his own discretion, as to the form of consecrating churches and chapels.”§ In Ireland, it is otherwise. During the Lieutenancy of the Earl of Strafford, a law was made for the consecration, not only of churches, but also of churchyards; and a form of consecration for both was inserted in the Common Prayer-Book, which is now in use in that part of the United Kingdom, and which much resembles the form used by Archbishop Laud, the great patriarch of the Puseyites. Were a Convocation of the Clergy now to

* Burn, pp. 345, 346.

† Gibs. 189; Johns 20.

‡ Burn, Vol. I. p. 357.

§ Ib. p. 325.

be held, Laud's form would, undoubtedly, be approved by a great majority of the lower House, and perhaps also of the higher. It was in substance as follows:—The Bishop approached the edifice at the western door, where persons specially appointed stood, and cried aloud, "Open, open, ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may enter in." Immediately, parties within threw back the doors, when the Bishop entered, and fell on his knees, and, with uplifted eyes and outspread hands, pronounced the place to be holy. Rising up, he next approached the chancel, several times throwing dust into the air; and, when he arrived at the rails of the communion table, he repeatedly bowed towards it; and then he and his clergy went round the church, repeating the 100th Psalm and a form of dedicatory prayer. Returning to the communion table, he pronounced bitter curses against all who should profane that place, at every curse bowing to the east, and adding, "Let all the people say, Amen." After the same manner, he pronounced blessings on all who should be benefactors. Then came the sermon, followed by the sacrament. When he approached the "altar," he bowed seven times, and, coming to the bread, he gently lifted up the cloth, but, suddenly dropping it, retreated a step, and again bowed several times; then he uncovered the bread, and bowed as before. He did the same with the wine. Having first taken of the bread and wine himself, he gave them to some of the principal men. To all this succeeded a number of prayers; and thus the ceremony of consecration ended.* Such, in its most finished form, is the rite of consecration. As performed at present, it is considerably reduced in point of length and ceremony; but, in spirit and essence, it is unchanged; and, when the people of England can bear more, they will have as much more as they can bear. When the evening draws on, the candles will appear. The Bishop of London would not have the altar lighted up till it be dark; but the night seems to be at hand!

Now, Sir, what think you of this ceremony of consecration? As a piece of Popish folly merely, it might perhaps be endured, or passed by in scorn; but the fraud involves a principle of great power and most pernicious influence. Confined to old parochial

* 2 Rush. Hist. col. 77.

burial-grounds, it was sufficiently offensive, and abundantly mischievous in its working; but men bore with it as a hoary abuse, a reverend absurdity, supported solely by blind custom and stupid apathy, without a particle of foundation in law, reason, or Scripture. But the introduction of the modern Joint-stock Cemeteries, in addition to making men think, has clothed the whole subject with a new character, and presented it in a new aspect. The rite of consecration has, by this means, at length obtained a footing which it never before possessed. This unreflecting course of the Legislature has exalted it into importance. In all the Cemetery Acts, it is acknowledged as an exercise of the Episcopal function, as a high and awful ceremony on which certain great consequences and important circumstances are made wholly to depend. But, if this superstitious custom is so pernicious as connected with such Cemeteries, what will it be in conjunction with the parochial Cemeteries which your Bill proposes to form? The three states of its existence will then stand thus,—bad, worse, worst. In the close of this letter, we will state the law of the case respecting the old system, and reserve the other two points for our next, which will, for the present, release you from further attention.

The old church-yard system was wholly, execrably bad. The mass of the public have no conception of the extent of the plunder that has been practised for ages on the English nation, especially in great towns. In the beginning it was not so; the evil crept on imperceptibly, till it has reached a height which fills the serious inquirer with astonishment. The clergy have no just claim to one farthing of the sums which they exact. This is well known to ecclesiastical lawyers, and, on fitting occasions, is freely expressed. With them, we have gone to the fountain head, and find it so. “The soil and freehold of the church is only in the parson, and in none other;” * and so likewise is the “churchyard.” † His position, however, is not that of a proprietor, but of a trustee, who is not permitted to profit by his trust. Hence the language of the law is: “Any person may be buried in the churchyard of the parish where he dies, *without paying anything for breaking the soil.*” ‡ “We do firmly enjoin that burial shall not be denied to any one, upon

Burn, Vol. I., p. 256.

† *Ib.* p. 349.‡ *Ib.* p. 257. Degge, p. 1, c. 1, 2.

the account of any sum of money; . . . for *burial ought not to be sold*; . . . *the clergy may not demand anything for burial*.”* “In such a case, the parson may *not demand anything for the ground or for the office*.”† Hear also that great luminary, Lord Stowell: “Ancient canons forbid the taking of money upon interment.”‡

It is as amusing as it is provoking to read the comments of modern ecclesiastics and their lawyers on these laws. Burn himself says: “As to the incumbent for burying, the foundation of the fee was *voluntary*, and the obligation or necessity of paying arises from *custom*.”§ Hear Lindwood also; “Albeit the clergy may not *demand anything for burial*, yet the laity may be compelled to observe pious and laudable *customs*.”|| Shade of Bacon! how can that which is in its origin and character voluntary, be rendered compulsory? All this is so clear, that he who reads may run. Sir, this is the undoubted law of the case. *The clergy have no authority whatever to exact one farthing either for the ground or for the office of reading the service, whether in the desk or at the tomb*. Whatever parties may please to give them is mere bounty, a gratuity, a gift. Are not their scales of fees, then, scales of extortion?

Sir, the plunder practised in our parochial burying-grounds is not their least amiable aspect. The conduct of the clergy in relation to them is frequently characterised, not simply by uncharitableness, but barbarity. The contemptible ceremony of consecration is by their pride and selfishness converted into an instrument of savage torture. Many of them labour to impress mankind with the belief that the deposition of their bodies in “a consecrated bed,” is essential to the peace of their departed spirits; and it is notorious that multitudes of persons have been enslaved by the terrors arising from this absurdity. Dissent, with its chapel burial-grounds, and private Cemeteries, has, nevertheless, done much towards furnishing an antidote to the evil; and had things remained as they were we might have gone on for a few more generations, since our backs had become accustomed to the burden; but if there is to be change, we must

* Lind. p. 278.

† 2 Hagg. p. 356.

‡ Burn, Vol. I., p. 269.

§ Ibid, Vol. I., p. 270.

|| Lind. p. 278.

in this, as in every thing else appertaining to our social system, endeavour to effect improvement.

So much for the old system. And do you think the public will submit to your new one? No! where there is no right to present payment, there can be no claim to future compensation; and, therefore, you may dismiss from your mind the hope of converting the thorns with which we are now molested, into spears!

November 17, 1842.

LETTER VIII.

THE EVILS OF CONSECRATION IN CONNEXION WITH THE JOINT-STOCK CEMETERIES—REDUCTION IN CEMETERY FEES—OFFER OF THE DIRECTORS OF KENSAL-GREEN CEMETERY.

SIR,—Why are the Joint-stock Cemeteries consecrated? Because otherwise the clergy would not bury in them, and thus damage would be sustained by the Companies. Why are such Cemeteries established by Act of Parliament? Because, without an Act the Bishop will not consecrate. Why will he not? Because, without an Act, a heavy tax on every body, interred, could not be secured to the clergy. The Companies themselves care not a rush for the rite of consecration. Why is one portion of the ground left unconsecrated? For the accommodation of Nonconformists. Out of this circumstance has arisen the odious and novel spectacle of a separation, even in death, between Churchmen and Dissenters. In the new Cemetery, at Leeds, you are aware, there is no such distinction. The “Necropolis” at Liverpool has never been consecrated, it has no Act of Parliament, and pays no fees to the clergy. One chapel only is erected, in which the respective funeral services of all communities are performed, and the dust of all classes mingles quietly together in the bosom of its parent earth. The Cemeteries of Glasgow, likewise, are the subjects of no Parliamentary Act, of no Episcopal consecration, of no clerical impost. The beautiful Ceme-

tery of Abney Park is in the same condition. All these "Cities of the Dead" resemble the cities of the living. Why, Sir, did not you make *them* your model, instead of those anomalous places around London? Are you prepared to carry out your principle? Are we next to have Church and Dissenting carriages on our railways? Are we, then, to have Church and Dissenting compartments on the decks and in the cabins of our steamboats? Are we, afterwards, to have new villages, towns, and cities, laid out in separate allotments for Churchmen and Dissenters? Are the fires of bigotry, in the nineteenth century, to spread yet further, and to blaze still higher? Must monuments of discord, at length, be reared among our very sepulchres? Does the dignity of manhood, or the honour of piety, demand that the signals of our division should be borne to the precincts of the eternal world? In that world itself is it thus that the spirits of men are to be classified? No! Why, then, attempt to classify the *bodies* of mankind upon principles which the Judge of all flesh will not apply to their immortal spirits? Let not purblind mortals invade the province of the Omniscient! Leave Him to perform unerringly the awful work of everlasting separation! If you will have new Parochial Cemeteries, let every inch be either consecrated or unconsecrated; let us have either, but not both. Let this most objectionable distinction end where it began, with the Bishop-taxed Joint-stock Cemeteries. In them, bad as it is, it is still much less intolerable than it would be in your new parochial grounds. In them, there are several redeeming circumstances, which will have no place in yours. The two divisions of ground, we believe, are, for the most part, equally eligible, and laid out with equal elegance; the chapels, too, are upon an equal footing as to respectability of appearance and accommodation; both parties are treated alike with respect and attention; both stand on the same level before the Company, neither domineering over the other. How different from this would be the condition of Dissenters in your parochial Cemeteries, conducted solely by the clergy and churchwardens! What scope they would furnish to these parties for insult, for injustice, and for oppression! The worst portions of the grounds would, of course, be too good for such creatures as Dissenters; and, as to the laying of them out, that might be deemed ~~worth~~

cessary ; grounds not consecrated might properly be left in their rude state ! With regard to chapels, any sort of erection might suffice for those who frequent the conventicle ! In the management of the grounds, too, what pledge would there be for common civility, or exemption from high-church insolence, or something even worse, because more substantially mischievous ? Yet a little while, and, it may be, every pulpit in the land will be occupied by a Puseyite, and, consequently, every Cemetery be under Puseyite direction. With such a prospect, is it a marvel if Dissenters take alarm and deprecate your scheme ? To the clergy and the wardens you give no rule of conduct but their own discretion, and the world have long since learned how to estimate *that* ! You set them above all control. You leave us in all points utterly at their mercy ; and, whatever be our grievance, we have no redress, no authority to whom the oppressed may appeal. We have simply, in silence, to put on our fetters and obey our masters ! Is this the legislation which befits Englishmen in this age of the world ?

The pecuniary aspect of the question is of vast importance, and must not be overlooked. We have already exposed the iniquitous system of clerical taxation by which the Cemeteries are oppressed. But we have reserved a number of most important facts, which we will now adduce in this and the next Letter, in further proof of the grave allegation, that the clerical compensation provided by all the Cemetery Acts, is a barefaced extortion, having as little sanction in law as in justice. Before us lies the "opinion" of one of the first ecclesiastical lawyers of his time, Dr. Addams, furnished by him expressly for the guidance of the Abney Park Cemetery Company, and which runs thus :—

" I am of opinion, that there is no law or custom by which the incumbent, or any other authority, of any one parish, can demand burial fees in respect of a corpse removed from such parish for interment in the churchyard of any other parish."

Sir, this is the law, and the inference is obvious. The compensation to the clergy exacted from all the suburban Cemeteries, is just so much robbery ! They have no claim whatever to it. The London tallow-chandlers have quite as much right, and a vast deal more, to stand forth and demand a power to tax

the several Gas Companies by Acts of Parliament, compelling them to pay a given sum for every burner they shall light in street or hall, in cellar or garret, in shop or parlour, in church or theatre. Advantage was taken of the supposed necessities of the Cemetery Companies. They believed that consecration was essential to their success; and, therefore, they submitted to the unjust and cruel conditions set forth by the clergy, which are, nevertheless, a source of great injury to the Companies, as well as to the public at large. We have already reprobated the meanness of the Companies in submitting to the extortion, and exposed their baseness in concealing the fact. Passing by these points, therefore, we now proceed to examine and illustrate the working of the system.

Let us take an example from Liverpool. In the Necropolis already mentioned, which is without an Act of Parliament, without consecration, and consequently not burdened with fees to the clergy, during the space of seventeen years, upwards of 1,200 bodies, on an average, have been annually interred; and the returns to the shareholders have generally averaged 12½ per cent. interest on the capital invested: in some years they have reached even to 20 per cent. The shares, which were originally 10*l.* each, have been repeatedly sold at a premium of 100*l.* That Cemetery, however, not being to the taste of the clergy, about five years afterwards, the Quarry Cemetery of Liverpool was formed. This Cemetery was *wholly* consecrated; so that the Established Clergy alone can officiate in it; and, as a matter of course, it pays enormous fees to them; fees absorbing so large a portion of the profits upon interments, that “no return has ever been made to the shareholders; and there is no appearance of pecuniary advantage for the future. The want of success is *wholly and solely attributable to the incumbrances consequent upon consecration.*”* The Company do business purely for the benefit of the clergy. The Liverpool example deserves to be followed. Of two cemeteries, one is all consecrated, and the other wholly unconsecrated. In that town, there is no collusion, as in the case of the London Cemeteries, in order to conceal the extortions of the clergy, and to make the uncon-

* Cemetery Interment, p. 186.

separated bear the burdens of the consecrated portion of the ground. In the Necropolis of Liverpool, both Dissenters and enlightened Churchmen have the means of obtaining justice for themselves. In so far as Abney Park is concerned, it is the same in London. If the metropolitan public took a just view of the matter, they would patronize that Cemetery *alone*, where they would neither be subject to ecclesiastical plunder, nor exposed to contact with the Popish imposture of consecration. But we are not without hope, that even the Bishop-taxed Cemeteries may yet be induced, in part, at least, to retrieve their character, and to do full justice to the Dissenters and others who use the unconsecrated ground. Several circumstances have occurred, within the last few weeks, which support this hope.

The Abney Park Company begin to understand somewhat better their peculiar position. They have profited, it seems, by reflection and inquiry. Truly, it was time; they blundered sadly at the outset. Forgetting that they had paid nothing for consecration, and that they were not Bishop-taxed, they somewhat unaccountably proceeded as if they had, and, like young merchants courting custom, they charged fees just a *little* lower than the Act-of-Parliament Cemeteries; for an adult interment, in a common grave, 1*l.* 1*s.*, and 5*s.* for the use of the chapel; for a child, 15*s.*, and 5*s.* for the use of the chapel; that is, 1*l.* 6*s.* and 1*l.* respectively. Now, however, "for a common interment, the *whole charge* is, for an adult, 10*s.*; a child, 8*s.*" This is as it should be; but even this moderate charge will yield as fair a return as the Bishop's Ten Shilling Model Cemetery. This Company must not confine the reduction to the open ground, but carry the principle throughout all the other departments of their beautiful Cemetery. Some of the Bishop-taxed Cemetery Companies have also begun to reflect a little. A few weeks ago, (that is, on the 17th of October,) a circular was issued by the London Cemetery Company, announcing a "*reduction*" of fees in their Cemeteries at Nunhead and at Highgate; that is, for a common interment, with desk service, adult, 12*s.* 6*d.*; ditto, child, 7*s.* 6*d.* As compared with their own original fees, the reduction here is even greater than at Abney Park.

From these facts, Sir, you perceive that at least one of the Bishop-taxed Cemetery Companies is not insensible to the

claims of justice, when urged by the voice of public opinion, which you correctly define as "that sentiment, on any given subject, which is entertained by the best-informed, most intelligent, and most moral persons in the community."* The Cemetery Companies could undoubtedly be managed and moulded by the voice of the Metropolis, and made to move as fast and as far as men loaded with clerical chains can move, in the path of justice and honour ; but what power on earth could move the committees which you propose to form, consisting everywhere of incumbents and churchwardens ? To expect from *them* either mercy or justice, were to go in the face of all experience ! Granting, then, that the premises of your Bill were as correct as we hold them to be erroneous, we would say, and all enlightened men would join us, *pass a law simply interdicting City sepulture, and there leave the matter.* Let the public provide for itself. The principle of legitimate commerce has already constructed noble Cemeteries on all sides of the Metropolis, sufficient to accommodate the mortality even of its hourly augmenting inhabitants, for centuries. We have already treble the number, indeed, suggested by your most intelligent witnesses, who spoke to that point, and represented by them as sufficient for the use of the capital. Whatever Cemetery projects may be necessary for the purposes of priestly pride and domination, of priestly emolument and aggrandisement, none, assuredly, are required for the true interests of the Metropolis. If every City burial-ground were closed to-morrow, you know that, without the addition of even one more Cemetery, we have already an abundance for many generations. We say, you *know this to be the fact !*

Sir, how came you to exclude from the Appendix to your Report the answer to the communication you addressed to the Kensal Green Company ? That answer was of more value tenfold than all that you have there published. It is now before us, and in it the Secretary says : "I have cause to know that the Directors of the several Cemeteries are *most anxious to state their willingness to offer such accommodation as will satisfy the public demand for hundreds of years to come*, provided an arrangement can be made with the different parishes to provide for the due removal of the pauper funerals." Then the document goes on to

* Public Opinion, p. 15.

say, that the Companies would bury the parish poor at an "almost nominal charge." It next sets forth the annual pauper mortality of some dozen parishes, comprising a population "equal to nearly one half of London," and "offers seven acres of their ground at Kensall Green," which will contain about 133,500 graves, and thus suffice for the interment of 1,335,000 deceased paupers,—and, at the rate of 1,000 burials a year, receive the pauper mortality of that half of the City for *thirteen hundred and thirty-five years!*

Sir, this is a momentous document! Again, we ask, how came you to withhold it? Was the reason, because the simple enunciation of its facts would have been utterly fatal to your project in the eyes of all thinking men?

Sir, if we must have new Cemeteries, there they are on every side, spacious, beautiful, and, where clerical extortion does not interfere, supplying the public demand at reasonable charges. Will your Cemeteries provide for the public either better or cheaper accommodation?

November 28, 1842.

LETTER IX.

THE ARGUMENT DERIVED FROM THE DIVERSIFIED AMOUNT OF FEES—THE
ANNUAL INTERMENT IN THE CITY AND OUT-PARISHES.

SIR,—Have you investigated the economy of the Metropolitan Churchyards? How, then, could you empower the clergy and churchwardens, in your proposed Cemeteries, to fix the "Tables of Fees?" That economy resembles nothing else known among men. There is no settled principle whatever in the matter. We have already proved it to be utterly unlawful for the clergy to demand one farthing for burials in any shape, whether for ground within the church or around it, for reading the service, for permission to erect grave-stones, or for the death-bell; yet, in spite of law, and in spite of justice, the most grievous exactions, in all these respects, have been made from

the people of England for many ages. The true character of these demands is strikingly illustrated by the singular diversity of their amounts. Whence that diversity? Hence: stealth has no established measure; robbery, at the outset, is regulated by no fixed rule; the amount of the depredation will depend on the courage of the depredators, and on the combination of circumstances. By this principle alone, are we able to explain the reason of the varied charges in the following tables:—

FEES FOR A SINGLE INTERMENT IN THE BEST GROUND WITHIN, VIZ., IN THE CHANCEL.

	£	s.	d.
At St. George the Martyr	2	14	8
St. Bride's	4	7	0
St. Paul's, Covent-garden	6	2	0
St. Swithin's, Cannon-street	8	10	0
St. Martin's-in-the-Field	10	17	8
St. Anne's, Dean-street, Soho	12	16	4
Kensington Church	20	0	0
St. Andrew by the Wardrobe	25	0	0

FEES FOR A SINGLE INTERMENT IN CHURCHYARDS—BEST GROUND.*

At St. Olave's, Tooley-street	0	10	0
St. Bennet Fink	0	16	8
St. Dunstan's, Stepney	1	1	0
Allhallows, Mark-lane	2	0	10
St. Luke's, Old-street	3	10	0
St. George's, Hanover-square	4	9	6
St. Mary-le-Strand	5	0	0
St. Luke's, Chelsea	6	6	0

FEES FOR PERMISSION TO ERECT, OR PLACE, TOMBSTONES.†

Head and Foot Stone.

At St. George's in the East	2	3	0
Allhallows, Great Tower-street	6	6	0

* Lord Stowell lays it down, that the only ground on which a fee can be exacted for a grave, is, first, “to keep churchyards in an orderly and seemly condition; and, secondly, to purchase new ones when the old ones become surcharged.” “To answer such charges,” says he, “both certain and contingent, it surely is not unreasonable that the actual use should contribute, when called for.” So say we. According to this celebrated Judge, when new parochial grounds are wanted, the clergy are bound to provide them from the enormous profits derived from the old grounds. How comes Mr. Mackinnon, then, to empower them to tax the public for the purchase of such grounds, and then to go on from age to age, as in past times, pocketing the proceeds? See Burn, vol. i. p. 268.

† There is no legal right whatever for the exaction of such fees. It is an imposition on public credulity and simplicity. See Burn, vol. i. p. 271.

Flat Stone.

	£	s.	d.
St. Anne's, Limehouse	4	0	0
Kensington Church	8	8	0
St. George's, Bloomsbury	12	5	0

FEES FOR DESK SERVICE.

St. Anne's, Dean-street, Soho	0	2	6
St. Catherine's, Coleman-street	0	3	4
Allhallows, Great Tower-street	0	5	0
St. Mary-le-Strand	0	9	0
St. Andrew's, Holborn	0	10	2
St. Olave's, Borough	0	12	6
St. Paul's, Shadwell	0	15	0
St. Bartholomew's, Bartholomew-lane	1	8	0

FEES FOR THE RINGING OF THE BELL.

At St. Anne's, Limehouse	0	3	0
St. Andrew's Undershaft	0	6	0
St. Bartholomew's, Bartholomew-lane	0	10	0
St. Dunstan's, Stepney	0	12	0
All Saints, Poplar	0	13	0
St. George the Martyr, Borough	0	14	3

Sir, we have fixed on the churches mentioned, simply as presenting a specimen. The fees exacted at most of the other churches, range up and down between the two extremes here presented, and in some cases ascend much higher. What think you of the system? Is any thing beyond this mere statement, necessary to expose its absurdity and its iniquity? Would not this extraordinary diversity, even in the absence of the laws we have produced in this and former Letters, demonstrate, that, originally, *justice* had nothing to do with the regulation of these demands, but that they were mere *gratuities*, varying with the rank and wealth of the donors? In the field of fair commerce, every article finds its level, and all honest producers, placed in the same circumstances, are found to demand for their several wares, much the same prices. What would the public think of the masters of six shops selling broadcloth of the same quality, per yard, at six different prices, and each differing from the other from fifty to one hundred and fifty per cent.? Would the inference be favourable to the moral character of the majority of them? If we look at all our suburban Cemeteries, we shall find that there

is scarcely any difference in their charges,—a fact which shows that their demands are based upon commercial justice.

But, Sir, this is not the end of the matter. The science and practice of extortion, in connexion with this subject, appear to have formed a clerical study. The business is refined beyond credibility. The most consummate financier could scarcely have carried it farther. No opportunity of robbing and fleecing mankind has been lost sight of. Non-parishioners are *almost* everywhere charged *double fees*, and, in some cases, considerably more,—a deed wholly without a justifiable reason. In St. Peter-le-Poor, a parishioner is charged 1*l.* 15*s.* 2*d.* ; “strangers, if in lead or wood, 20*l.* extra, and *double* the above fees; if in iron, 50*l.* extra.”

In districts where lodgers are numerous, they are treated as “strangers,” and are charged *double fees*. This is a rich corner of the field.

In London, the mortality among children is very great, and in fixing the table of fees for their interment, it was needful to take great care so as to turn it to good account. This care has been duly taken. Incredible as it may seem, the fees for children are, in many cases, the same as those for adults; in others, 1*s.* 6*d.* less; in others, only 2*s.* less; in others, one-half. Another fine point was, to determine when childhood ends, and when manhood begins. In some parishes, it terminates at 12; in others, at 10; in others, at 9; and, in others, at 7 years of age! All beyond these ages are charged as full-grown persons.

The doctrine of extra digging, too, is a nice question, and a fertile source of extortion! The standard of depth varies as much as the standard of childhood. In some cases, it actually begins at *four* feet, and all beyond that must be paid *extra*! Where the soil is virgin, also, there is frequently a fee demanded for breaking it!

Sir, do you perceive the bearing of this multitude of facts upon your scheme? Are you really aware that there are within the walls of the City no fewer than *ninety-seven* parishes? Are you aware that there are *seventeen* parishes without the walls? Are you aware that there are *twenty-four* out-parishes in Middlesex and Surrey? Are you aware that there are ten parishes

different allotments of ground? Those who delight in ridicule will find a fit subject in your project.

The alarm which Mr. Walker and interested parties have laboured so long and so hard to raise, is wholly unfounded. In the City, there is no peril, nor is there more in the suburbs; while the new Cemeteries, already opened on all sides, are drafting off a large part of the business, and thus everywhere relieving the grounds that were filling too fast. Your new parochial Cemeteries are necessary only for one purpose,—to enable the clergy to recover the ground they have lost in the business of interment; for the tables we have laid before you show, that an immense majority of the interments are in grounds other than those of the Established Church. The effect of your Bill would be to close all such grounds as are not already Bishop-taxed, and to drive the whole business of burial to these, and to your parochial Cemeteries, thus augmenting the fees of the clergy three or four-fold.

Sir, is this the system which you are labouring to uphold and to extend?—a system as profligate in principle as it is unjust in practice;—a system which constitutes one of the chief abuses of our times, and a most foul blot upon the Christianity of our age? It is intolerable, and will, surely, not much longer be endured by this enlightened nation! While you are so much alive to one species of abomination, is it not strange that you should be so insensible to another? Why did you not examine your witnesses on these points? Why did your Bill not provide for the consolidation of all the parochial grounds under the new system, if a new system there must be, and for the equalising of the fees in all the new Cemeteries? In such a step, there would have been something statesman-like, and not a little gained to the cause of rectitude, justice, and decency. It would also have served both to dignify the more grovelling, and to decorate the less comely parts of your project, and thus have recommended it to the favour of reflecting and candid men. But it seems you do not aspire to be a reformer, but a conservator of ecclesiastical abuses.

December 1, 1842.

LETTER X.

RELATIVE POSITION OF CHURCH AND DISSENTING BURIAL-GROUNDS—
ANALOGY BETWEEN THE CHURCH-EXTENSION AND CEMETERY-EXTENSION
SCHEMES—CLERICAL RAPACITY ILLUSTRATED IN NORWOOD CEMETERY.

SIR,—At the conclusion of our last Letter, we said, that “an immense majority of the Metropolitan interments are in grounds other than those of the Established Church.” This is a point of so great importance in connexion with your Bill, as to demand special notice and further investigation. It is, moreover, happily, a point which may be determined with a satisfactory degree of correctness. We have before us a “General Bill of the Christenings and Burials at the Parish Churches within the City of London and Bills of Mortality, from December 15, 1840, to December 14, 1841, according to the Reports made weekly to the Queen’s Most Excellent Majesty, and the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, by the Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks.” This accurate and trustworthy document presents a total of 14,599 interments in grounds belonging to the Established Church. Before us, likewise, lies another document, the “Death Report of the Registrar General,” which extends from the 9th of January, 1841, to the 1st of January, 1842. This important production is headed, “Metropolis:—Summary of the Weekly Tables of Mortality for 1841,” and gives the total of deaths as 45,284. Here, then, are the materials of an argument; the difference in the Tables, of fifteen days with respect to the periods of beginning and ending the year, is of no moment. If these two documents refer to the same boundary, (and we are told nothing to the contrary,) the result will stand thus:—

Interments in Parochial Grounds . . .	14,599
Interments in Dissenting-grounds and Cemeteries	30,685
<hr/>	
Total Mortality of the Metropolis . . .	45,284

Sir, if this view be correct, is it not clear, that the Established Church burial-grounds do not receive *one-third* of the mortality of the Metropolis? There is something striking in this fact, as compared with the evidence of the Rev. W. W. Champneys. That gentleman says (2863): "The deaths in my parish I calculate to be about 1,200 in a year." He next states, (2864,) that "the average number of interments" in his churchyard, is "360,"—less than one-third. Can correspondence be more exact? It is clear that the case of Mr. Champneys presents very nearly the average condition of the parochial grounds. Were you prepared for such a result? Perhaps you knew the fact. If you did not, your masters did. This was the cardinal point in the daily meditations of Bishop Blomfield; the grand point of his prelatic policy. If you did *not* know it, you and your Committee were culpably negligent. It was the first thing you ought to have inquired into, when you, with Messrs. Cowper and Beckett, sat down to draw your Bill. If you did know it, you are chargeable with the grossest outrage, not only on the rights of Englishmen, but on political propriety, that has been attempted for a century. Your plan, however, merits this praise; it perfects the theory of an Ecclesiastical Establishment. Sir Robert Inglis cries, "*A Church for all!*"—Mr. Mackinnon, with a shout, responds, "AND A GRAVE FOR ALL!" "Amen," says the Bishop, "Amen! That is good!" Amen, and a good let it be; but, amid all your zeal for consecrated bricks and mortar, spades and pickaxes, we hope you will have some regard to Religious Freedom, to Political Right, and Moral Justice.

If, to descend a little, some gratitude at least be due to old benefactors, the Dissenters ought not to be so treated. They have, in times past, done Mother Church good service in supplying her defects, with regard both to the dead and to the living. It was demonstrated, some two years ago, that, in London, even with the aid of the Dissenters, she did not supply Church-accommodation to nearly *one-third* of the living population. But in regard to the supply of that one-third, what was her position? Considering her revenues, most discreditable! It was stated thus:—

Nonconformist Edifices	.	.	.	372
Episcopalian	.	.	.	255
Nonconformist Hearers	.	.	.	148,800
Episcopalian Hearers	.	.	.	102,000
Nonconformist Communicants	.	.	.	37,200
Episcopalian Communicants	.	.	.	10,200*

Sir, think of these facts, and be instructed! Are not the moral, unspeakably more urgent than the mortal, necessities of the Metropolis? Behold, then, its obligations to Dissent! A searching and comprehensive inquiry into the moral and spiritual condition of this great capital, even now, would yield a volume of evidence such as never yet saw the light. And, if the condition of the City is still unutterably deplorable, what would it have been without the aid of the Dissenters? But the assistance they have yielded in reference to religious instruction, notwithstanding its magnitude, is much less than that which they have yielded in the matter of interment. Yet the advocates of the Church are less uncivil to Dissenters than you. Sir Robert and the clergy, hitherto at least, have only called for more churches; they have not yet proposed to shut up all Meeting-houses. Now, to more churches, if those who wish for them will only build them with their *own* money, Dissenters have no objection, so long as they touch not Dissenting chapels and Nonconformist privileges. But if a Bill were proposed for closing all the Dissenting chapels of the Metropolis, and building a sufficient number of Established churches to accommodate the entire population at the expense of the public, it would alter the case. Indignant millions would rise up to repel such an invasion of the rights of conscience, and to repress such an enormity of legislative injustice and persecution. But would not the principle of your Bill authorise such a measure? As we have already argued, is it not just as unlawful to close our grave-yards as it would be to close our chapels?

Sir, these Returns of the Parish-clerks and of the Registrar-General, by the aid of ten figures, enable us to construct an irrefragable argument, and to condense that argument

“ Into *one* word,
And that one word is—Lightning!”

* See “ Jethro,” p. 22.

Only reflect a moment : by one and the same act, you shut up all the existing burial-grounds in the Metropolis, and construct Cemeteries at the distance of two miles around. This done, what follows ? This ; you drive the entire mortality of the City either into the Joint-stock Cemeteries, every one of which, with the single exception of Abney Park, is already burdened with an enormous Bishop-tax for the benefit of the clergy ; or else you drive it to the New Parochial Cemeteries, which you place wholly in the clergy's own hands ! Either way, you monopolize the dead, and mulct the living ! By this means, you recover at once to the clergy their lost dominion in the empire of Death, and place within their grasp upwards of thirty thousand dead bodies a-year, more than *two-thirds* of the entire mortality of this mighty city !

Sir, have you considered what would be the value of this achievement to the clergy ? At the very outset, in their hands, it would be equal, at the least, to an annual grant of TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS ! Nor is this all ; this vast revenue will go on doubling itself every thirty years ! At a day not very distant, the annual income of the London clergy from these abodes of death, would be ONE MILLION STERLING !

What a benefactor ! What glory in the Clerical world awaits the " Head of the Clan Mackinnon !"

" Glory, like a circle in the water,
Which never ceaseth to enlarge itself !"

Only, in *your* case, it will not

" By broad spreading disperse to nought."

No ! your illustrious name will survive as long as the Church by law established. Your canonization is sure and certain ! You will, beyond doubt, by a grateful Clerical posterity, be placed first on the Calendar ; and most justly too, for you would confer upon the spiritual Corporation of London, more substantial good than all the " saints" that ever adorned or disgraced the annals of Popery ! You, Sir, will be fully entitled to preside amid Milton's peerless host, that

" Swell with pride, and must be titled gods,
Great benefactors of mankind, deliverers,
Worshipped with temple, priest, and sacrifice."

But, Sir, it is to be hoped you will yet wake from your dream. Take warning, we beseech you, and flee from the snare into which you have already fallen! Unless you make a timely retreat, you will become an instrument of deeds from which your honest nature would recoil with horror! A man of your simplicity is not safe in Clerical society. This great project, to which their Heads and Chiefs are secretly, or otherwise, urging you, is but a part of a mighty whole—a stupendous scheme of conquest over the spiritual liberties of Englishmen, and of destruction to all denominations of Protestant Dissenters! With regard to this last class, through the dead they are aiming a mortal blow at the living. The dangers to religious liberty are thickening every hour. Oxford, with brazen brow, is leading the way, and, with hasty steps, Cambridge is following her courtly sister. As the conductors of the *Patriot* stated last Monday, it is an established fact, that Professor Scholefield and the clergy of Cambridge have resolved to demand their *full fees* for all interments, without distinction, in that town, whether in Established or Dissenting burying-grounds. Sir, this is not an empty threat. But lately, on the occasion of the burial of a Dissenter, at *her own chapel*, by her own pastor, this same Professor Scholefield immediately transmitted to the mourning survivors “a bill for every item usually found in his funeral accounts;” and “the bill was actually paid.” Sir, these are facts. Do you not blush to read them?

Sir, if such is the beginning, what will be the end? We shudder at the anticipation! Let your Bill pass, closing all our grave-yards, and soon, very soon, will another be forthcoming to close our chapels! Yes; if your unjust, cruel, and despotic Bill shall become law, the days of our freedom are numbered! It is now being published, in all possible ways, that “*the Clergy of the Church of England* are ALONE duly commissioned to administer the sacraments of the Gospel in this country.” This is indubitably the doctrine of a vast majority of the clergy; the inference and the application are as obvious as they are terrible. At what time soever the counsels of the clergy shall prevail at Court and in Parliament, at that time the doom of Non-conformity will be sealed! If matters proceed for twenty years longer as they have proceeded for a few years past, a crisis will

arise, the consequences of which no man can foresee. The Dissenters of England are, and they have ever been, the firmest friends of the House of Hanover, while that house has, in turn, been the gracious and faithful protector of their rights. To that Royal Line they are devoted with a loyalty the most intense, disinterested, and pure. But, in return for continued loyalty, they look for continued protection. They *know* their rights; and, under the blessing of that Providence to which they ascribe all their mercies, and in which is all their confidence, their numbers, intelligence, wealth, and character abundantly enable them to *assert* those rights. National collision and convulsion, if unhappily they must come, while they will but purify Dissent, will infallibly consume the Ecclesiastical Establishment. The spirit and the power which overthrew Popery, will not submit to the rule of Puseyism!

“What! shall reviving thralldom again be
The patched-up idol of enlightened days?
Shall we who struck the *lion* down, shall we
Pay the *wolf* homage; proffering lowly gaze
And servile knees to ————?”

Sir,—It is right, before parting, to correct an error into which we were led respecting the Norwood Cemetery. We gave that Company credit, we find, for more than they deserved. We have since received information indubitably certain; and the Act of Parliament establishing the Cemetery has also been transmitted to us. We have now ascertained, that our previous informant, although himself a very intelligent proprietor of the Cemetery, was slightly in error. The Company, when a family bring their own minister, merely remit the fee which otherwise they would pay to the Dissenting chaplain. But our main object is, to state, that we have with much regret discovered that *the condition of this Cemetery is the most deeply degrading of all*. We have read the tax clauses of the Bill with utter astonishment. They are monstrous beyond credibility. It is enacted by Clause XVIII., that upon every corpse removed for interment in this Cemetery from any parish in the County of Surrey, or from Lambeth, or Battersea, or Wandsworth, or London, or Westminster, or Southwark, a tax of *twenty shillings* shall be paid, if buried in a vault, or catacomb, or brick-grave, and of

seven shillings and sixpence, if buried in the open ground, to the incumbent of the parish whence it was brought ! We really had thought, that, in Bishop Blomfield's Ten Shillings Model Cemetery at Westminster, the climax of extortion had been reached ; but here the enormous impost is doubled ; and we have it on good authority, that, but for the indignant resolve of a certain Lay Lord, the Bishops would have added some eight shillings more ! How heathenish, my Lord of London, must be the soil of Norwood !

“ It is profane, imperfect, (oh, too bad !)
Except — *and bishoped by thee !* ”

One sort of praise, at least, is always due to the clergy : how inconsistent soever they may be with themselves, they never depart from “ the good old rule.” Finding it impossible to reduce extortion to a principle, and to regulate robbery, they take all needful care to bind themselves by no law ; or, at least, no law but this,—*to grasp all they possibly can* ; “ *Rem, quo-cunque modo rem.* ” Only look at the clerical tax imposed upon the five Cemetery Companies :—

KENSAL GREEN.

				£	s.	d.
Vaults, &c.	.	.	.	.	0	5 0
Open Ground	.	.	.	.	0	1 6

HIGHGATE AND NUNHEAD.

Vaults, &c.	.	.	.	.	0	5 0
Open Ground	.	.	.	.	0	1 6

TOWER HAMLETS.

Vaults, &c.	.	.	.	.	0	7 6
Open Ground	.	.	.	.	0	2 6
For Paupers	.	.	.	.	0	1 0

WEST LONDON AND WESTMINSTER.

Vaults	.	.	.	.	0	10 0
Open Ground	.	.	.	.	0	10 0
Parish Clerk	.	.	.	.	0	1 0

NORWOOD.

Vaults, &c.	.	.	.	.	1	0 0
Open Ground	.	.	.	.	0	7 6

Caprice runs riot through the whole of these Acts. It extends to sums, to persons, to place, to distance, to every thing ! O

indignant disgust is not limited, however, to the conduct of the clergy; the conduct of the Norwood Company also richly deserves the severest reprobation. They not only submitted to this unparalleled extortion, but most meanly, most discredibly, most basely, framed and published a Table of "Charges and Fees," which lies before us, setting forth, with a *Nota Bene*, the COMMON CEMETERY-LIE, which runs thus:—

"N.B.—*No fees whatever are payable by the parties, to any parish FROM or THROUGH which bodies may be removed for interment in this Cemetery.*"

Sir,—Such is the fraud practised upon the public by this Company: but it is asserted, by the voice of the Highest, that, "although hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished." There is an Eye which penetrates the thickest disguise; and an unseen Hand that smites in secret places. To us it is no matter of surprise, that this Cemetery, although now in the *seventh year* of its existence, had last year only 238 interments, viz., 201 in the consecrated, and 37 in the unconsecrated part. The Episcopal Chaplain who buried these 201 corpses, received a salary of 100*l.*; the service over each body therefore cost, in round numbers, no less than ten shillings. Add this sum to the tax of twenty shillings for the vault funerals, and seven and sixpence on the open ground funerals, and you have seventeen and sixpence, and thirty shillings, respectively, all incurred to the clergy, simply in consequence of consecration! Can any undertaking prosper under burdens so oppressive? The mere clerical exactions alone would constitute a considerable return to the Company.

Sir,—If you take our counsel, you will drop your Bill. If the Bishop wants 50 or 100 new Cemeteries, let him provide them as he does his new Churches, by voluntary contribution, and manage them as he pleases. All we require is, that you should let us alone—things, if amiss, will right themselves. No enactment upon the subject is called for. Let the clergy and the churchwardens perform their duty by exerting their present unlimited powers over sextons and grave-diggers; and the nuisance, if nuisance there be, will soon be abated in all the churchyards, and there is none elsewhere. But if you will persevere, let it be in the way of fresh inquiry. Many who approve of your ob-

ject despise your evidence, and while they hold by the principle of your Bill, repudiate most of its provisions. If you will persevere, let the subject be thoroughly sifted on all sides, by the admission of reputable evidence from all quarters, and then let whatever is indispensable to the public welfare be enacted, no matter at what cost, with due respect to the rights and interests of all classes, sects, and parties.

December 6, 1842.

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